

**Dehistoricised Histories: The Cultural
Significance of Recent Popular New Zealand
Historical Fiction**

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Abstract

The recent popularity of mass-market New Zealand historical fiction coincides with the increasing vocality of particular cultural discourses that resist the influence of revisionist histories on dominant understandings of national identity. This thesis examines how the depiction of colonial history in four such novels legitimates and sustains hegemonic understandings of New Zealand as culturally European. The novels analysed are *The Denniston Rose* (2003) by Jenny Patrick, *Tamar* (2002) by Deborah Challinor, *The Cost of Courage* (2003) by Carol Thomas, and *The Love Apple* (2005) by Coral Atkinson. The cultural context in which these books have been produced is situated within a history of nationalist discourses and Raymond Williams's theorisation of hegemonic cultural processes is employed to explain how contemporary national culture continues to rely on colonial principles that sustain settler cultural dominance. Close analysis of the temporal and geographical settings of the novels reveals how the portrayal of history in these novels evades colonial conquest and the Māori cultural presence. A comparison of the historical and contemporary cultural significance of the spatial settings employed in these novels – the wilderness, pastoral, and colonial urban spaces – highlights how these settings tacitly communicate that New Zealand is culturally European. Nevertheless, the problematic cultural legacies of colonialism still haunt these novels. The way in which the narratives resolve these issues reveals that hegemonic New Zealand identity is reliant on a dehistoricised view of settlement and therefore perpetually vulnerable to the intrusion of Māori memory.

Introduction

When Mike Smith attacked the eponymous pine tree on One Tree Hill with a chainsaw in 1994 on the grounds that it was a symbol of Māori oppression, many New Zealanders were appalled by what they saw as an unfounded attack on an iconic Auckland landmark. For such people, Smith's rationale for attempting to cut down the tree was inexplicable, although the tree's history and its iconic status are emblematic of both the cultural imperialism of settlers and the difficult cultural inheritances of colonisation. A solitary tōtara tree had long occupied the peak of One Tree Hill/Maungakiekie prior to the arrival of settlers and had both geographical and cultural significance for local Māori ("A short history of the pine"). In 1845 Maungakiekie was bought from local Māori by a European property speculator and in 1852 the tōtara was destroyed, allegedly as a protest by a group of European workmen. Replacement native trees were eventually planted, along with five pine trees to shelter the fragile saplings from the wind, but they did not survive, leaving several exotic pine trees as the new landmark in the area. Consequently, not only can the initial settlers' action be seen as evocative of settler cultural imperialism but the aftermath, the whims of nature replacing the native tōtara with a foreign pine, is redolent of justifications of colonisation that cast European cultural dominance as natural and inevitable.

Ensuing controversy has further underlined the way the tree embodies the difficult cultural legacies of colonisation in New Zealand history and identity, although there has been little mention of history and much of identity. After a further attack on the tree in 1999 the now-tethered tree was cut down in 2000 for public safety, watched by thousands

of emotional Aucklanders, with plans to plant a new tōtara sapling. Following an indefinite delay related to local iwi Ngāti Whatua's Treaty of Waitangi claims, a pohutukawa sapling was anonymously planted along with a plaque reading "One NZ" in 2005, the slogan employing the terminology of settler backlash discourses that resist revisionist histories and biculturalism to suggest that the initial attack on the tree was unnecessarily divisive. A *New Zealand Herald* editorial reported that the site, previously "free of any political associations," was now marked with "an unfortunate and quite unnecessary political taint" ("Political taint"). Despite the claims of this editorial, the use of the One Tree Hill site as a means for political protest was not unprecedented. As well as the attack by settlers on the initial tōtara and recent attacks by Māori on the pine, in 1962 the second-to-last pine tree (of the group planted in the 1870s) was vandalized so that the hill finally embodied its name and in the 1970s there was allegedly an attempt to blow up the last pine using explosives ("A short history of the pine"). However, the evasion of history and Māori culture in the *Herald's* editorial and in the "One NZ" plaque reflects how the cultural significance of One Tree Hill, like the majority of national icons, is governed by the limits of settler memory and culture. The intrusion of Māori memory into the One Tree Hill site disrupted the dominant settler narrative, unmasking how the history of colonisation continues to haunt contemporary national culture. The reaction of many New Zealanders to this intrusion, the appeals to a hegemonic national identity and the evasion of colonising historical events, is evocative of how hegemonic culture perpetually suppresses and contains the history of colonisation in order to sustain monocultural nationalist mythology.

In spite of this apparent cultural inclination to ‘forget’ colonisation, in recent years there has been burgeoning interest in settler history. A large number of non-fictional texts focusing on settler history have been published since 2000,¹ as have historical literary novels,² but it is mass-market historical fiction which has enjoyed the biggest surge in popularity. The most renowned author of such fiction is Jenny Patrick, whose 2003 novel, *The Denniston Rose*, has sold over 20,000 copies (“Premier New Zealand Bestsellers”) and is allegedly being turned into a film (“Rose hits the big screen”). She has followed up this book with a sequel, *Heart of Coal* (2004), and a prequel, *Catching the Current* (2005), which have also both sold well. While Patrick’s fiction has been the most commercially successful, a number of other authors have also effectively capitalised on the rising popularity of the historical fiction genre. Popular titles include Edmund Bohan’s *The Matter of Parihaka* (2000), Carol Thomas’s *Consequences* (2000) and *The Cost of Courage* (2003), Felicity Price’s *Dancing in the Wilderness* (2001), Deborah Challinor’s historical trilogy *Tamar* (2002), *White Feathers* (2003) and *Blue Smoke* (2004), as well as her fourth historical novel, *Union Belle* (2005), and Coral Atkinson’s *The Love Apple* (2005).

The most commercially popular historical novels privilege a traditional view of European settlement as benevolent and uncontested, generally steering clear of aspects of colonial history that highlight the negative effects of colonisation on Māori or depict Māori resistance. In this thesis I will analyse four novels that are characteristic of recent popular historical fiction, arguing that the popular appeal of such books can be attributed to the way that they evade depicting colonisation and tacitly communicate hegemonic Eurocentric understandings of national identity at a time when such a formulation is

perceived as under threat. The most commercially successful novel analysed is Jenny Pattrick's *The Denniston Rose*. Jenny Pattrick is a jeweller as well as a graduate of Bill Manhire's creative writing course at Victoria University (Sharp "Atop A Steep Incline"). *The Denniston Rose* is her first novel and was first published in 2003. It has since been reprinted five times in 2003, five times in 2004 and twice in 2005 before being repackaged with its sequel, *Heart of Coal*, as an illustrated hardback book in 2006. *The Denniston Rose* tells the story of a young girl, Rose, who moves with her mother to the remote coal mining community of Denniston, which is situated on a desolate and isolated plateau 1800 feet above the West Coast of the South Island. The novel, set in the 1880s and 1890s, catalogues Rose's tumultuous childhood and the concomitant development of a community in Denniston.

Three other novels are analysed that, while not enjoying the same level of success as *The Denniston Rose*, are part of the same publishing phenomenon. Deborah Challinor's *Tamar* was published in 2002 and featured on bestseller lists ("Bestsellers"). It is the first volume of an historical trilogy that covers some fifty years, from the 1880s to the 1930s, and the successive novels have also featured on such lists. Challinor is an academic historian who wrote several historical texts about the Vietnam War before writing *Tamar*. The novel begins with Tamar's immigration to Auckland, recounting her experiences in establishing a life in colonial New Zealand. Her first disastrous marriage to an alcoholic and mercurial Englishman, Peter Montgomery, ends with Montgomery's death after she bears an illegitimate son, Joseph, to her Māori lover, Kepa. After giving Joseph to Kepa's family, Tamar runs a brothel in Auckland before marrying Andrew Murdoch and raising their family in the Hawke's Bay. Carol Thomas's *The Cost of*

Courage was published in 2003. Thomas is an English immigrant who has lived in New Zealand for over twenty years and works as a librarian. She has written three novels, two of which are set in colonial New Zealand (*Consequences* and *The Cost of Courage*). *Consequences* (2000) featured on Bestseller lists (“Bestsellers”) and *The Cost of Courage* was well-received by reviewers who saw it in the same company as *The Denniston Rose* (Sharp “Atop A Steep Incline”). Set in Reefton in the 1880s, it tells the story of a young woman forced by financial circumstances to marry a local widower. The main plot recounts the obstacles to Alice and Sam forging a genuine relationship and building a life together. A subplot involving a disagreement with a Māori couple leads to the destruction of their house by fire, forcing the family to live in a tent for a year while Sam works in a coal-mine to earn money for a new house. Finally, I look at Coral Atkinson’s *The Love Apple*, which was published in 2005. Atkinson is an educator and writer and *The Love Apple* is her first novel. Set in Hokitika in the 1880s, it tells the story of a widowed and grieving Anglo-Irish photographer, Geoffrey Hastings, who marries pregnant sixteen year-old Huia, an impetuous part-Māori girl who is frustrated by the difference between her romantic fantasy and marital reality. The ill-fated marriage finally fails when Huia runs away to join a travelling show, while Geoffrey (along with other Irish immigrants) struggles to find happiness in New Zealand. *The Love Apple* also featured on Bestseller lists in 2005 (“Bestsellers”).

The 2006 re-publication of *The Denniston Rose* and its sequel *Heart of Coal* in a hardback book replete with colour photographs on high-quality paper is evidence of the immense commercial success of Patrick’s books. The marketing of such fiction in the manner of scholarly or high-brow books also suggests that the publisher perceives a

change in the way such fiction is being appreciated. Popular literature has often been perceived as an inexpensive and formulaic product that initiates a cycle of repetitive consumption, with books being understood as objects of entertainment rather than art or knowledge.³ Following their commercial and middle-brow critical success Patrick's novels are being marketed as serious literature. Illustrating the two novels with historical photographs and re-packaging them as an expensive hard-back book illustrated with historical and contemporary photographs, maps, and diagrams of the Denniston coal mine and the West Coast recasts the texts as important and enduring cultural artefacts. The re-packaging of *The Denniston Rose* is therefore indicative of not only the commercial success but the perceived cultural significance of recent popular historical fiction, inviting consideration of the cultural context in which such novels are being produced and received as well as the content of such novels.

These novels have been produced and received in a cultural milieu preoccupied with the influence of revisionist histories on hegemonic understandings of colonial history and national identity. Between 1880 and 1970 an interpretation of history that cast the colonisation of Māori as benevolent and a natural process of cultural evolution was dominant. This interpretation was central to a discourse of cultural colonisation that reinvented New Zealand as a culturally European space and mythologized a national identity based on settler culture. Since the 1970s, revisionist reinterpretations of colonial history that emphasise the displacement and oppression of Māori have challenged this historical perspective. Revisionist histories have been perceived as destabilising the

origins of settler identity, precipitating renegotiations of settler identity. They are also tacitly recognised as a potential threat to national identity, triggering defences of understandings of national identity as culturally European. In 2004 the level of public debate regarding issues of colonial history and national identity seemed to reach a crescendo following controversy over the Foreshore and Seabed Bill, which precluded the possibility of Māori claiming ownership of the foreshore and seabed under the Treaty of Waitangi by declaring it public domain, and National Party leader Don Brash's Orewa Speech, in which he condemned political attempts at biculturalism as culturally divisive and inhibiting progress. Resistance to the cultural impact of revisionist histories on the national culture is clearly not just the domain of a vocal minority but expresses anxieties widely felt among what Dr. Brash described as "mainstream" New Zealand.

The reception of recent popular historical fiction in the media suggests that it is being understood in terms of recent cultural discourse regarding New Zealand's colonial history and identity. Reviews and articles publicising such fiction have referred to the allegedly partisan perspective of revisionist histories and suggested that these novels provide a more even-handed view of colonial history that does not simply paint settlers as aggressors and Māori as victims. For example, Iain Sharp suggested that *The Denniston Rose*'s popularity could largely be attributed to the fact that "Pakeha readers had grown weary of being made to feel guilty over the land grabs of the 19th century and wanted to invest instead in pride-inducing stories about how hard their ancestors had toiled" ("Turning History's Pages"). In a similar vein, Kris McGehan comments on the allegedly hitherto concealed social history presented within *Tamar*, suggesting that it exposes "a few things that you won't find recorded in the official texts," such as prostitution, alcohol

abuse and inter-racial relationships. Implicit in such comments is the notion that these books are telling the ‘other side’ of colonial history and/or the ‘real’ colonial history, in contrast to revisionist histories that are considered partisan and ideologically driven.

Indeed, reviews of recent historical fiction have assumed that such books are a fictional re-enactment of ‘what really happened’. Janet McAllister suggests as much when she comments that recent popular historical novels “aim to be rollicking good yarns, but also historically accurate, plausible and possibly educational” (61). Similarly, Sheila Alexander declares in a review of *Tamar* that “[a]lthough [the] characters are fictional, the historical material in *Tamar* is accurate”. Little distinction is made between fiction and historical writing, as exemplified in the media reception of Deborah Challinor’s *Union Belle* (2005). Set in Huntly during the time of the 1951 waterfront lockout, *Union Belle* was the subject of a feature-length article by Bruce Holloway in the *Waikato Times* in which a veteran of the lockout, Fred Rix, is drawn upon to assess the novel. It is suggested in the article that the fictional elements of *Union Belle* (the love affair) are simply built upon, and can therefore be clearly distinguished from, the historical core (the lockout). Accordingly, Rix is employed to evaluate the worth of the novel because he can attest to how truthfully it represents historical reality. Implicit in the belief that recent popular historical fiction is accurately recounting settler histories that have often been neglected by revisionist historians is the idea that the depiction of New Zealand history and identity in such fiction is therefore unconstrained by ‘political correctness’.

The cultural climate in recent years has been characterised by attacks in both political and cultural arenas upon politically correct attitudes perceived as alienating

ordinary New Zealanders. Leftist commentator Chris Trotter identifies the furor following Brash's Orewa speech as being due to the fact that

the entire race debate has been dominated by a cosy circle of bureaucratic, academic, ethnic and political elites. Having arrived at a consensus regarding the Treaty of Waitangi and its role in New Zealand society, these elites were – prior to Brash's Orewa speech – all but unchallengeable by persons or groups operating outside their hallowed precincts.

The reception of these books similarly suggests that they are valued as a welcome contrast to the exclusive elitism of intellectual discourses. Jane Clifton wrote in a review of *Tamar* in the *Listener* that “[i]t's a rare treat to get fictional narrative about New Zealand history from an airport bookstall-style novel, rather than from a highbrow writer such as Maurice Shadbolt”, suggesting that ‘history’ is generally cloistered within highbrow academic discourses. Such a belief has been enthusiastically supported by Deborah Challinor who comments, “history belongs to everyone and should therefore be accessible to all and not reserved for academia. History books need to be written in an easily readable and interesting way so that everyone can have access to their pasts” (Sharp “Past Masters”). In another article Challinor hopes that “traditional historians and academics” will “have a *wide enough mind* to realise that [*Tamar*] is fiction and to accept that I have done my research” (McGehan; my emphasis). By positioning herself in the culturally familiar position of the down-to-earth yet ground-breaking populist challenging

the elitism of academia, Challinor appeals to a cultural inclination to mistrust claims of specialist knowledge in a cultural milieu marked by a widespread sense of political and cultural alienation.

In this way, the popularity of recent popular historical fiction can be attributed to how it is perceived as depicting and validating mainstream understandings of national history and identity. For example, columnist Christopher Moore perceived “a burgeoning spirit of literary nationalism bouncing through the books New Zealanders published, bought and read” in 2004, a year in which Moore also perceived the literary scene as being less constrained by political correctness. This reference to literary nationalism, a term previously associated with the 1930s literary scene, implies that an alleged indifference to political correctness has been an antidote to the destabilising effect of elitist and self-conscious postcolonial discourses on the positive portrayal of national identity in literature. The belief that the representation of New Zealand culture in popular historical fiction is a panacea for the artificial political correctness of self-conscious postcolonialism has also been espoused by Challinor. She suggests that *Tamar* is for “ordinary New Zealanders – it’s not *The Bone People*, but it’s supposed to be a really good read – a bit of escapism, but factually correct. I want it to be a popular book” (McGehan). Her reference to *The Bone People* registers not only the ‘highbrow’ status of Hulme’s book but also its decidedly liberal vision – its insistence on the importance of Māori identity and its projection of biculturalism. The fact that the article ends with Challinor’s reference to *The Bone People* underscores how books such as *Tamar*, *The Denniston Rose*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *The Love Apple* are considered by reviewers,

at least some of the authors, and presumably readers to depict an authentic vision of New Zealand culture unconstrained by the concerns of revisionist histories.

Historical fiction generally registers contemporary historical perspectives and cultural preoccupations. Philip Steer has argued that New Zealand historical fiction has risen in popularity when there is greater concern about race relations, and that it generally projects mainstream perspectives of race relations onto historical events (56). Steer examines three periods in which historical fiction has been particularly fashionable: the mid-1880s to 1900, the 1960s, and from the early 1980s to mid-1990s. He argues that novels written between 1880 and 1900 mirrored settler beliefs of the time by depicting British settlers as superior, justifying contemporary disregard for Māori culture and society. In contrast, the novels of the 1960s generally espoused a view consistent with widespread contemporary opinion that Māori must be assimilated into settler society (56). Steer suggests that historical fiction since the 1980s, in response to revisionist interpretations of colonial history, has taken an increasingly different moral position, “show[ing] Pakeha on the back foot only a century after the same events provided the basis for literature that unquestioningly endorsed their superiority” (58). E. J. White’s study of several New Zealand historical novels published in the 1980s and early 1990s also identifies a shift in moral perspective. Her thesis focuses on fiction by C. K. Stead, Ian Wedde, and Maurice Shadbolt, suggesting that the settler protagonists are depicted as separate from, and even alienated by, colonial authority in a way that implicitly absolves settlers of any complicity in the colonial displacement and dispossession of Māori. White

argues that these novels acknowledge colonial injustice while simultaneously validating the settler cultural presence to “authorise, for Pakeha, a guiltless sense of belonging within the present” (White 7).

Just as more ‘literary’ historical novels have responded to contemporary cultural concerns, recent popular historical fiction is similarly influenced by its cultural milieu. However, popular fiction is usually attributed less cultural significance because, as Terry Sturm has noted, the standard conventions of popular fiction are often considered to render historical settings in popular fiction either a merely decorative backdrop for the plot, or escapist, idealised nostalgia (576). Such judgements are often attributed to the elitism of academic literary standards, but are also a product of broader cultural assumptions, as suggested by reviewer Roger Warwick’s declaration that he initially feared that *Heart of Coal*, sequel to *The Denniston Rose*, would be a “ladies’ book”. The spectre of *The Heart of Coal* being a “ladies’ book” registers not only that the book might be a romance, long considered an inferior genre preferred only by women, but that its status as a historical romance undermines any possibility that it could reflect historical reality and, hence, be culturally significant. It is because of this cultural tendency to dismiss popular fiction as insignificant that Deborah Challinor attempts to distinguish *Tamar* from the romance genre, declaring it is not a “bodice-ripper” and “has a bit more intellectual content” (McGehan).

Given these academic and mainstream perspectives on popular fiction, approaching novels such as *The Denniston Rose* and *Tamar* from within the discipline of literary studies might be criticised by some as assessing them by inappropriate standards or ‘over-reading’ them. However, as Terry Sturm points out, the assumption that the

portrayal of history in popular fiction is insignificant overlooks how popular New Zealand historical novels are informed by the “historical and social consciousness” of their time (619). For example, novels written by Nelle Scanlan in the 1930s cast local cultural conflict between settlers and Māori as symbolic of the “universal drama of civilization and progress” (590), while the books produced by Yvonne Kalman in the 1980s reflected a revisionist interpretation of colonial history by being “somewhat more sensitive to racial issues than predecessors in the genre” (619). Deborah Challinor has also identified the influence of contemporary cultural concerns on popular fiction, suggesting that historical fiction is currently popular because “[h]istory is in our face every day with issues like the foreshore and seabed. When these issues are asleep, people ignore the history, [but now] people are more interested” (McAllister 61). Popular historical novels may to some extent use history as a mere exotic background for romance or adventure, but they also are inevitably influenced by contemporary cultural thought regarding history and identity.

However, while popular fiction reflects the historical consciousness of its cultural context, it does not necessarily interrogate cultural knowledge in the same way as literary fiction. This difference is a result of the different artistic function and narrative form of popular fiction. Popular fiction’s artistic function is primarily that of entertainment, while literary fiction’s function is primarily what Peter and Dianne Beatson have labelled “communicative” in that it “construct[s] meaning and communicates[s] knowledge across frontiers of time, space and culture” (213). Accordingly, as Sturm has noted, while literary fiction likes to toy self-consciously with “the conventions and stereotypes of the popular genres that celebrate [general culture]”, popular fiction tends to reflect “the

fundamental values and behaviour” of mainstream culture (579). Historical novels that are considered highbrow, such as *The Matriarch* by Witi Ihimaera (1986), *Symmes Hole* by Ian Wedde, or *The Singing Whakapapa* by C.K. Stead, have to varying extents destabilized the authority of historical narratives by revealing how “the construction of history is synonymous with the construction of a coherent system of world reality, one that serves the political interests of its authors” (Greene 74). In contrast, despite often recounting sensational stories, popular historical fiction tends to create a dominant, coherent perspective and reproduce the expected temporal experience of reality. In this way, these novels mask their fictionality so that the authority of the text remains intact, lending an authenticity to the historical events described in order to substantiate already existent cultural knowledge about colonial history. Literary fiction’s propensity to sceptically interrogate versions of history lends itself to the articulation of revisionist histories or an engagement with revisionist ideologies, with history often being a main subject of such novels. In popular historical fiction, history is more often the context of a story rather than a subject itself. In order that the historical context does not overshadow the main storyline, popular fiction therefore frequently reflects hegemonic interpretations of history already familiar to readers.

As much as a hegemonic perspective of colonial history is discernible in recent historical fiction, it is not necessarily the intended or only meaning of such novels. Janice Radway has reasoned that in the case of popular genres the assumption that a text has only one meaning frequently leads to making conclusions about the ideological function of the entire genre, regardless of differences between particular books (5). It is not argued that the novels examined in this thesis all have an identical ideological function, or even

that they all portray an identical version of history. These books actually present a range of different historical perspectives, from the endorsement of hegemonic history in *The Denniston Rose* to the more revisionist perspective of *Tamar*. However, regardless of whether these novels are conscious responses to contemporary cultural debate about revisionist histories and national identity, it is probable that many readers are to some extent appraising and understanding these books in light of recent cultural controversy over colonial history, as suggested by their reception in the media. Furthermore, readers' interpretations of these books will also be influenced by deep-seated beliefs about New Zealand culture. My understanding of reading as a multilateral practice, in which readers create as much as consume the meaning of texts, is influenced by Janice Radway's assessment of literary practices in *Reading the Romance: Women, Patriarchy, and Popular Literature*. She suggests that reading has often been construed in literary analysis as a simple act of "ingestion" (6), an analogy that Radway suggests is carried too far when applied to textual comprehension since it is "[t]o ignore the fact that comprehension is actually a process of making meaning, a process of sign production where the reader actively attributes significance to signifiers on the basis of previously learned cultural codes" (7). Recent popular historical fiction employs particular settings invested with cultural mythology that speak to a range of historical perspectives yet sustain the hegemonic belief that New Zealand identity is culturally European.

Monte Holcroft suggested that the popularity of popular fiction resides in writing with "honesty" and incorporating "ideas and sentiments ... simple enough and shallow enough to be shared without strain by very large numbers of readers" (*Creative Problems* 8). It seems likely that *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage* and *The Love*

Apple have resonated with a wide readership because modes of representing national identity that are culturally familiar to many New Zealanders are couched within these novels' representations of New Zealand's colonial history. Jane Stafford's observation that when reading books such as *Tamar* "[w]e read quickly without reflection, and then we forget" is a literary assessment of the originality and creativity of such texts (10). Considering such novels in terms of their cultural purpose, as mainstream entertainment, this observation also hints at how such books reaffirm what New Zealand readers already 'know' – they re-inscribe the myths of settlement that underpin hegemonic understandings of colonial history to rearticulate that New Zealand is culturally European.

This thesis will argue that *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *The Love Apple* tacitly legitimate a hegemonic view of national history and identity. Examining the depiction of colonial New Zealand in these popular novels reveals how cultural residues of colonialism continue to sustain a largely monocultural national identity, as well as the ways in which aspects of colonisation that have been problematised by revisionist histories are contained or reworked to maintain traditional settler-dominated formulations of national history and identity.

Chapter One presents a history of colonialism as it has informed nationalism, suggesting that each stage in the development of national identity has been based on colonial inheritances that ostensibly legitimate settlement and settler cultural dominance. The growing cultural influence of revisionist histories since the 1970s has been

recognised as a threat to traditional formulations of national identity but its power has largely been defused through contradictory cultural pressures that have problematised settler identity yet sustained national identity. Using Raymond Williams's account of hegemony, I argue that hegemonic culture has responded to the influence of revisionist histories by selectively refining and incorporating colonial principles in a way that mitigates postcolonial pressures yet sustains settler cultural dominance in the national culture. Therefore, while the depiction of colonial history in recent historical fiction reflects mainstream understandings of national identity, it also meets backlash and even liberal cultural requirements. Chapter Two draws connections between the temporal and geographical settings of the novels under examination and dominant understandings of colonial history, arguing that these settings perpetuate a cultural framework that evades acknowledging the Māori cultural presence, the tangible practices of colonisation, and the effect of colonisation on Māori. Having analysed the overt practices of historical and cultural evasion in these novels, I examine in Chapter Three how these books covertly articulate that New Zealand is culturally European. I argue that the wilderness, the pastoral, and the urban spaces are invested with cultural beliefs that legitimate settler cultural dominance. I draw ideological connections between these spaces' historical and contemporary significances, suggesting that the employment of wilderness, pastoral, and colonial urban settings in these narratives implicitly presents New Zealand as culturally European.

Analysing the portrayal of colonial history and national identity in these popular novels reveals the tenacious cultural inheritances of colonisation. The conceptual framework of colonialism continues to inform not only relationships between settlers and

Māori but the bases of New Zealand identity, leading to the continued effort to erase Māori and the memory of colonisation from formulations and representations of national identity. These novels re-inscribe an ahistorical perspective on colonial New Zealand that legitimates settler cultural dominance. This dehistoricised sense of cultural origins produces a national culture perpetually vulnerable to the intrusions of history and Māori cultural memory, resulting in the need to constantly re-inscribe settler belonging. A substantive engagement with colonial history, rather than the celebration of a shallow veneer of tradition exemplified by the tree on One Tree Hill, is crucial to the development of a secure national culture.

Notes

¹ The plethora of non-fiction texts recently published include O. M. Andresen's *Johanna's World* (2000), Olive Trotter's *Pioneers Behind Bars: Dunedin Prison and its Earliest Inmates 1850-1870* (2002), Philip Temple's *A Sort of Conscience* (2002), Michael King's *Penguin History of New Zealand* (2003), Tom Brooking's *The History of New Zealand* (2004); Trevor Bentley's *Captured By Maori: White Female Captives, Sex and Racism on the Nineteenth-Century New Zealand Frontier* (2004), Gordon McLauchlan's *The Farming of New Zealand: the People and the Land* (2006), David Hasting's *Over the Mountains of the Sea: Life on the Migrant Ships, 1870-1885* (2006), Paul Moon's *Fatal Frontiers: a New History of New Zealand in the Decade Before the Treaty* (2006) as well as numerous, frequently self-published, amateur histories of towns and provinces.

² Titles include Peter Wells's *Iridescence* (2003), Annemarie Jagose's *Slow Water* (2003), and Fiona Kidman's *The Captive Wife* (2005).

³ For example, in *The Arts in Aotearoa/New Zealand* Peter and Dianne Beatson describe popular fiction as "easily digestible artistic fodder for the masses" with authors being "local representatives of an international entertainment business which deals in artistic commodities as other businesses deal in alcohol or cosmetics" (16).

Chapter One

Colonial Inheritances: Articulations of National Identity

The emergence of nationalism in New Zealand is entwined with colonialism and the country's colonial origins continue to haunt articulations of national identity. Myths of settler identity were forged in the 1880s through a process of cultural colonisation that established settler cultural dominance in the colony and precipitated an embryonic sense of national identity. These myths continued to sustain settler-dominated¹ formulations of national identity well into the twentieth century. However, in the last half of the twentieth century the political and cultural influence of revisionist histories by historians such as Claudia Orange and James Belich has increasingly problematised key aspects of colonial history that have traditionally sustained the settler sense of belonging, such as the belief that British settlement was peaceful and uncontested. Yet, while revisionist histories have precipitated reconsideration of settler cultural identity, national identity has, somewhat paradoxically, been largely shielded from their impact. From the late nineteenth-century ambivalent proto-nationalism of identifying as both New Zealanders and British to the mid-twentieth century view of New Zealand identity as culturally European, national and settler cultural identity were recognised as being analogous. But since the 1970s and 1980s, self-conscious articulations of an indigenous cultural identity for settlers that is distinct from, but equivalent to, that of Māori have often implied that settler identity is different from national identity. Such an assumption is a result of the often contradictory effects of decolonisation that have supported the notion that national identity is distinct from any one cultural identity. Nevertheless, the threat revisionist histories pose to the

monocultural national identity is tacitly recognised in both backlash and mainstream discourses that attempt to neutralize their significance. Applying Raymond Williams's account of hegemonic culture to nationalist discourses, I argue that the influence of revisionist histories on national identity is defused by incorporating core colonial beliefs that sustain contemporary formulations of national identity while superficially responding to the concerns raised by revisionist histories. The identification of the colonial cultural inheritances that continue to inform national identity in this chapter lays the groundwork for my analysis in Chapters Two and Three of how recent popular historical fiction communicates a hegemonic view of national history and identity.

Recolonisation

Contemporary national identity emerged from a cultural and economic sea change in the 1880s following the physical conquest of New Zealand. New Zealand's population had been growing at a tremendous rate prior to the 1880s, instilling confidence that the colony would continue to embody the virtues of progress and become "a qualitative and quantitative reproduction of Britain" capable of developing into an independent nation, if not an empire (Belich *Paradise Reforged* 77). Belich has labelled this the "Greater Britain" outlook and argues that a "demographic shock" in the 1880s, the result of the initial meteoric population growth being followed by stagnation due to economic depression and changing ties with Britain, created a growing sense of "insecurity and uncertainty" in the colony (76-77). This anxiety about the future of the colony was assuaged by a new ideology that shifted the emphasis from an undiscerning endorsement of progress at all costs to a more circumspect vision of progress as "modest, steady

improvement or modernisation” (76). A process of cultural and economic restructuring replaced the initial conception of New Zealand as having the potential to be a nation as powerful, if not more so, than Britain with the notion that New Zealand would be as good as, if not better than, Britain (76-77). Belich has labelled this the “Better Britain” outlook, describing the cultural and economic restructuring as a process of “recolonisation” (76). This cultural shift saw New Zealand’s relationship with Britain displace its relationship with Australia, while an “Old British recognition of New Zealand Britishness became essential – something that had to be proved again and again” (77). The social and economic effects of this ideological shift and its inevitable effects on New Zealand culture are made clear in Belich’s characterisation of recolonisation as “a remarkable historical phenomenon: an amazing transcending of distance, a spatial miracle that made light of 12,000 miles and plugged London almost as firmly as Auckland into the New Zealand socio-economy” (547).

As central as Britain now was to substantiating the colony’s sense of self, residual ‘Greater Britain’ notions regarding New Zealand’s superiority underpinned proto-nationalist beliefs about the nation. For example, while New Zealand’s support of Britain in the Boer War (1899-1902) was fuelled by imperialist sentiment and commitment, it also stimulated unprecedented patriotism and fuelled the public expression of national identity. New Zealanders eagerly volunteered to fight for the empire with approximately 6,500, predominantly New Zealand-born volunteers, serving in ten contingents (Belich *Paradise Reforged* 79). There was also enthusiastic public support, with large crowds seeing contingents depart and public subscriptions helping to fund the war effort. Colonies competed with each other in how best to support Britain in the war, both in how

quickly each colony's contingents arrived in South Africa and how well each colony's troops fought (Sinclair 126). New Zealand soldiers purportedly gained a reputation among British troops as being courageous, hardworking and skilful, and the achievement of the New Zealand troops in South Africa was considered to have demonstrated New Zealand's commitment to the Empire while distinguishing New Zealanders as superior to the British (McIntyre 343). It was in this cultural context that nationalist miscellany, including a national flag, epithets such as "Kiwi" or "Maorilander," and nationalist symbols such as the fern leaf, were adopted (343).

Other events in the early 1900s that also seemed to reflect and foster public expression of nationalist sentiment included the widespread opposition to joining the Australian Federation in 1901, and the victorious All Black rugby tour of Britain in 1905 which "seemed to suggest that a new virile breed of men was developing in a pioneer land" (McIntyre 343). In this way, New Zealanders were considered "the best of the British" at the same time as they were also considered to possess attributes assumed to be lacking in the British, such as egalitarianism and self-reliance (Belich *Paradise Reforged* 78). The combination of old and new colonial ideologies enabled a British identity to co-exist with an emergent national identity. Therefore, even as New Zealand was eagerly proving its worth to Britain through its contribution to the Boer War, a *Sunday Times* article in 1901 could argue that most New Zealanders opposed joining a federation with Australia because they believe "that their country has a grand separate destiny to work out" (qtd. in Stafford and Williams 131). Under recolonial ideology, New Zealand may no longer have aspired to be a bigger and better version of England but the veneration of

British culture still facilitated a competitive outlook: New Zealand would be more British than the British.

Recolonial ideology reconfigured the past as well as the future of New Zealand. The initial understanding of the colonisation of New Zealand as evidence of British imperial might and unlimited, ascendant progress was reframed with new myths of settlement that emphasised an uncontested, Arcadian process of colonisation in New Zealand (Belich *Paradise Reforged* 77). The significance of the New Zealand Wars in colonisation was downplayed, settler victories were exaggerated, and the intensity of Māori resistance was minimized. Concomitant with this reworked history was the belief that Māori were inevitably threatened by modernity and would subsequently either be assimilated or ‘die out’. Colonists such as Walter Buller believed that their obligation to Māori was to “smooth down their dying pillow [so that] history [would] have nothing to reproach [them] with” (Park 189). Social Darwinism was an influential ideological force in the late nineteenth century and it was believed that the decline in the Māori population was due to the “fatal impact” of European civilization on what was assumed to be a less civilized people (Belich *Making Peoples* 248). However, while social Darwinist notions led to a fear of miscegenation in colonial America and Australia because of the perceived innate inferiority of black people and Aborigines, it was viewed more positively in New Zealand as a means of assimilation (Stafford and Williams 128-29). It was believed that traditional Māori society as it existed could not survive the march towards modernity but, as Stafford and Williams have noted, individual Māori were considered to be “by savage standards, intelligent, adaptable and capable, if properly educated, of making the

transition to modernity” (110-111). This revised interpretation of history facilitated and reinforced settler cultural dominance in the colony.

Recolonisation essentially reframed Māori territory as settler cultural space and this act of cultural colonisation was naturalised through colonial writing that continually presented New Zealand as settler cultural space. New Zealand historian Peter Gibbons has articulated how a range of cultural texts maintained the myths of settlement and identity that Belich identifies as recolonial. He terms this process “cultural colonisation” (“Cultural Colonisation and National Identity” 14). Myths of colonisation and the burgeoning national character were cemented in the public consciousness through a range of cultural products, primarily textual, that identified settlers with New Zealand through the adoption of native motifs and the articulation of nationalist sentiment. These cultural texts were both high and low-brow, fiction and non-fiction, and included literary and historical texts, newspaper articles, advertisements, pamphlets, and posters. Such texts were “involved in the processes of colonization, in the implementation of European power, in the description and justification of the European presence as normative, and in the simultaneous implicit or explicit production of the indigenous peoples as alien or marginal” (Gibbons “Non-fiction” 32-33). The emergence of national identity in these texts is therefore invested with principles of recolonisation.

Given that New Zealand was being constructed as settler cultural space, it is perhaps surprising that a large number of texts focusing on Māori culture and history were produced in this time period. Gibbons has argued that these texts reveal how Māori were being simultaneously assimilated and marginalised in settler constructions of national identity (“Non-fiction” 63; “Cultural Colonisation and National Identity” 13-14).

Such texts were purportedly produced in response to the belief that Māori were dying out and the conviction that their cultural traditions must be preserved. The preservation of Māori culture and history in print was primarily focused on the appropriation of cultural and historical remnants that provided a localised national history and distinctive national identity for settler society (Gibbons “Non-fiction” 60-63). Jane Stafford and Mark Williams’s analysis of Maoriland writing, the bulk of which was produced within the time period that Gibbons has associated with cultural colonisation, substantiates his account of how New Zealand was culturally reconfigured as settler space. They describe how Maoriland writing drew on the authority of colonial ethnology to rationalise the appropriation of Māori culture as the preservation of a ‘dying race’ and suggest that such writing represents “the first literary evidence of a national consciousness” (11). The nationalist focus and culturally appropriative approach of Maoriland writing mirrors the characteristics Gibbons has identified as central to culturally colonising texts. This process of cultural colonisation replaced an earlier “Literature of Invasion”, or a literature reflecting the physical act of conquest (Gibbons “Non-fiction” 38), with a “Literature of Occupation” that authenticated the presence and dominance of the settler society and invented the prevailing understanding of New Zealand identity (55).

Despite its ongoing cultural persistence, the early twentieth-century practice of appropriating indigenous motifs to establish a native identity did not, however, definitively resolve settler cultural anxieties. Monte Holcroft articulates the primary destabilising issue for a native settler identity – the disconnection between settlers’ cultural heritage and their location: “Our legends and myths have been brought across the seas: they have no roots in our soil, no monuments on our hills, no congruity of season

and climate” (*Creative Problems* 19). In response to this sense of dislocation and alienation, cultural nationalist writing of the 1930s endeavoured to forge an authentic identity for European New Zealanders located in the New Zealand landscape. Allen Curnow’s Introduction to *The Penguin Book of New Zealand Verse* (1960) is an iconic cultural nationalist text in which he summarizes the cultural nationalist agenda and identifies its poets, including R.A.K Mason, A.R.D Fairburn, Charles Brasch, Denis Glover and himself, as well as essayists such as M. H. Holcroft and fiction writer Frank Sargeson (17-67). In this Introduction Curnow asserts that New Zealand wears “its national identity hobbledehoyishly,” but suggests that weaknesses of national identity are those of collective expression rather than individual identification, since “we think faultily about national ‘youth’ if we forget the limits of the metaphor: it does not apply to individuals” (19). While earlier colonial writers are described as having tried prematurely to “concoct the ‘national’ by colonial pressure-cookery, with much sentimental steam and scraps from Victorian kitchens”, the cultural nationalist poetry of the 1930s is considered to reflect a genuine creative maturation (22). The authentic New Zealand identity that Curnow identifies in this poetry stems, in his view, from a rational and realistic engagement with the alienating landscape.

In his Introduction to the earlier *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45* Curnow criticizes late colonial literary tendencies to pepper an essentially imported mode of writing with local signifiers as superficial, inauthentic and disconnected from the realities of the New Zealand landscape. The objective of the arts from Curnow’s perspective is to situate imaginatively the settler within the landscape in such a way as to ameliorate the “tension between the New Zealander and the land his body inhabits but his spirit has not

won” (53). Such creative aspirations would soon be realized in the poetry of cultural nationalists. For example, Ruth Dallas’s poem “The Return” (1953) suggests that the duration of settlement has forged an emotional connection between New Zealanders and the land. The character’s discovery of an old gate on the family farm evokes an exaggerated historical view of settlement:

We found a gate at the end of the gorse hedge,
 Stained with grey and orange lichen, held
 By a rusty chain, and leaned upon it thinking
 That it had always been there, it seemed so old. (9-12)

However, the narrator then notes “But no, it was new, there had been another gate”, further embellishing the length of European settlement and implicitly according settlers a sense of belonging due to their historical connection with the landscape (13).

Fifteen years after suggesting that New Zealand still needed to be invented, Curnow identified a number of poets who had begun to ‘create’ New Zealand by engaging with the landscape and suggested that “[t]he best of our verse is marked or moulded everywhere by peculiar pressures – pressures arising from the isolation of the country, its physical character, and its history” (Introduction 17). The sublime yet obdurate South Island landscape personified the cultural nationalist vision because it embodied the “gaping discrepancy between imported expectations and the intractable locality on which colonial thought imposes them” (Newton 35). Accordingly, many cultural nationalist poets employed the South Island setting to communicate their vision

of burgeoning nationhood. The task for the cultural nationalist poet was to shore up settlers' fragile sense of belonging by resolutely engaging with this alienating landscape and cataloguing the relationship between settlers and the land.

The cultural nationalist engagement with the pressures of history was similarly pessimistic, seeing New Zealand's colonial history as insignificant. Curnow saw the tendency for New Zealand writers to focus on the settler struggle to civilize the hostile landscape as an attempt to find a worthy historical narrative: "It may be, in part, that because history and the portents of progress have little to offer us, we have tried to escape into pre-history, a scale in which we need feel no smaller than men are" ("Introduction to *A Book of New Zealand Verse 1923-45*" 73). The impulse to call on broader, primeval historical perspectives is evident in T. H. Scott's description of travelling around the South Island in "South Island Journal" (1950). He reveals how finding Māori shelter drawings leads him to imagine that Māori had known and "possessed [the land] in the elemental human way tribesmen may have possessed continents-fiercely, spiritedly, fearfully, yet deeply and nobly, feeling the wind and the sky consciously, with no constriction of the spirit" (294). Scott effectively attributes his consuming interest in Māori shelter drawings to the way in which they indicate an archaic history of interaction between humans and nature.

This attempt to escape into a broader history of civilisation was central to "disavowing colonial conquest" (Newton 28). The cultural nationalist vision of colonial history displaced Māori by redefining colonisation as the settler conquest of land, rather than the settler conquest of Māori land, in order to legitimate formulations of national identity centred on settler culture and history. This marginalisation of Māori is evident in

Curnow's analysis of Denis Glover's poetry. He suggests that in Glover's best poems "the poet finds a treaty between the man and the elements; it is something that has been won at a price on behalf of the rest of us ... we are asked to ratify this treaty by an act of imagination" ("Introduction" 52). Such an interpretation is suggestive of how the occluded historical view of cultural nationalism helped displace the status of the relationship between the settlers and Māori to privilege the relationship between settlers and the land. Almost sixty years later the use of the term 'treaty' seems bitterly ironic, unavoidably bringing to the contemporary reader's mind the Treaty of Waitangi and problematizing Curnow's conception of settlers' relationship to the land. It is, however, emblematic of the cultural nationalist focus – the story of colonisation is the effect of the shift to the Antipodes on settlers, the 'price' the settlers pay. Despite the seemingly anachronistic focus of the monocultural nationalists, the inclination, even today, to privilege settlers' conquest over nature and diminish the significance of the settler displacement of Māori in popular portrayals of colonial history reveals the success with which the cultural nationalists ratified Glover's nature treaty with their "act[s] of imagination" (52).

Cultural nationalism is not merely a high-brow cultural movement but part of a wider cultural impetus to "model a native idiom in a colonized territory" (Newton 26). The economically and socially driven recolonisation between 1880 and 1970, as described by Belich, and the demotic cultural colonisation between 1900 and 1960, as identified by Gibbons, are related attempts to naturalise the settler presence within a colonised land. Gibbons himself draws a thematic connection between literary nationalism and his account of cultural colonisation ("Cultural Colonisation and National

Identity” 14), but all three colonial practices are integrated since one principle underlies their attempts to articulate a localised settler identity. These colonizing practices essentially articulated and enacted the same late nineteenth-century colonial ideology in different ways, in different arenas, and at different historical moments. In this way, they can be considered to constitute a discourse of cultural colonisation.

Monte Holcroft wrote in *Creative Problems in New Zealand* of the issues that problematised and destabilised the confidence of settler occupation, and his solution to feelings of being interlopers in the New Zealand landscape is suggestive of the main principle underpinning these practices of colonisation. He wrote, “[t]he only way anything in this world can be possessed, in any true sense, is by loving it; and although love may be inarticulate, it thrives upon expression” (26). The connection Holcroft draws between expression and possession is useful for considering how recolonisation, cultural colonisation, and cultural nationalism framed New Zealand as a settler cultural space. The purpose of these colonial ideologies was the cultural possession of the New Zealand landscape; that is, to establish that what had been Māori land, or a land governed by Māori society, was now New Zealand, a land governed by settler society. This cultural work, expressed as national identity, was achieved by repetitively expressing a connection between settlers and the local, be that through the adoption of native iconography, the appropriation of Māori cultural signifiers, or identification with the landscape. The rationale underpinning the perpetual settler endeavour to reframe New Zealand as culturally European might be more cynically described, to revisit Holcroft’s analysis, as ‘expression is possession’.

Decolonisation?

According to both populist and academic narratives, New Zealand is, and has been since the mid-1960s, experiencing a protracted process of political, economic, and cultural decolonisation. In *Paradise Reforged*, James Belich traces external processes of decolonisation between 1965 and 2000, identifying globalisation and the disengagement from Britain (perhaps best pinpointed for expediency as 1973, when Britain joined the European Economic Community) as factors that have contributed to the phenomenon (425). Belich has outlined how resistant New Zealand was to economic decolonisation, as symbolised by the importunate campaign to preserve British export ties that had formed the “the economic basis of the recolonial system” (433). The New Zealand government fought to retain an agreement with Britain well into the 1970s and even, to a lesser extent, in the 1980s (434). This persistence was in part due to a failure to notice that Britain was pulling away from New Zealand, which Belich suggests stemmed from cultural as much as economic assumptions (460). The cultural prejudice underpinning New Zealand’s dogged allegiance to Britain contributed, for example, to the belief of Prime Minister Rob Muldoon that while the economic recession as it impacted on pastoral exports was temporary, the high price of oil was not. Belich suggests that the view owed less to economic considerations than to the culturally intolerant belief that “[d]epending on Britain was one thing; depending on a bunch of Arabs was another” (402). This process of decolonisation continued regardless of New Zealand’s reluctance, destabilising not only the nation’s sense of economic security but also its cultural identity.

At the same time as external decolonising pressures were disrupting hegemonic 'Better Britonism', internal social and cultural forces were impacting on New Zealand society. Perhaps surprisingly, the social turmoil within New Zealand during the 1970s and 1980s as a result of middle-class settler social activism (such as the environmental, the anti-nuclear, and the feminist movements) encouraged the shift from Better Britonism to an independent national identity. Belich has argued that the success of settler activists at initiating social change in the 1980s was often due to how they framed their positions in a way that reinforced nationalist mythology (519). The cultural significance of New Zealand establishing an anti-nuclear policy in the 1980s, for example, is often expressed in terms of the moral fortitude of a small country standing up to a global superpower such as the United States. However, while decolonising social forces were strengthening articulations of an independent national identity, decolonising cultural forces were destabilising understandings of settler belonging, creating a somewhat paradoxical distinction between national and settler identity. Māori activism and revisionist histories made cultural space for the persistent but hitherto excluded colonial memory of Māori, destabilising hegemonic narratives of colonial history and initiating debate about settler identity.

Māori claims of indigeneity and an associated rich history and culture centred within New Zealand have also provoked attempts to define a unique and indigenous settler identity. In his Introduction to *Pakeha: the Quest for Identity in New Zealand* (1991), Michael King notes that while much is known about Māori history, as well as the history of migrants to New Zealand such as Chinese, Dalmatian, and Indian immigrants, little is known

about the origins and motivations of mainstream Pakeha migration from Britain; next to nothing about the baggage – cultural, spiritual, emotional, psychological – that these people brought with them; and absolutely nothing about how their attitudes and values changed as a consequence of interaction with a new land, with the Maori, and with other settlers (7).

Accordingly, European New Zealanders such as Lyndsay Head, W.H. Oliver, Christine Dann, and Kevin Ireland share their perceptions of settler identity in King's book in an attempt to begin to define a self-determining yet localised settler identity that distinguishes them from both Maori and their British forebears.

Intriguingly, the controversy surrounding settler identity seems to have deflected the impact of revisionist histories on understandings of national identity, even though settler and national identity have always been tacitly understood as interchangeable. In part this is because decolonising social forces in the 1980s bolstered a sense of a unique and independent national identity that seems to reject rather than embody cultural imperialism, as indicated, for example, by the resistance to America influencing New Zealand's defence policy. Furthermore, the various social movements that contributed to national mythology often tacitly endorsed Māori resistance to colonialism to some extent by acknowledging its relevance to their movement. For example, many groups within the nuclear-free movement perceived nuclear testing in the Pacific as another form of colonialism for Pacific peoples and therefore saw the nuclear issue as related to other broader issues of racism, colonialism and the rights of indigenous peoples (Clements

114).² In this way, the nuclear-free activist movement was to some extent politically allied with the resistance of Māori activists to colonialism so that wide-spread public support of the nuclear-free movement seemed evidence of a national antipathy to colonialist attitudes. Therefore, the sense of an independent national identity strengthened in the 1980s through the success of social movements such as the anti-nuclear movement was assumed to be representative of both Māori and settler cultural beliefs and aspirations. For these reasons, while revisionist histories have led to reconsiderations of settler identity, national identity has been largely protected from their influence. However, the recognisable potential of revisionist histories to destabilise settler-dominated national mythology still precipitates settler defences of hegemonic interpretations of colonial history and condemnations of biculturalism.

The emphasis on the displacement and cultural oppression of Māori in revisionist histories is often criticised as a distorted view that slights the bravery and hard work of settlers who transformed large sections of New Zealand into productive farm land, built cities, and established a central government. Literary critic C. K. Stead defends colonial history by downplaying the level of cultural conflict between Māori and settlers:

Our history is not something we need to be ashamed of. Our forebears were brave people who travelled great distances, suffered the pain of severance and the shock of the new, and did their best to establish the colony with minimal damage to the local tribes, whom they treated mostly with courtesy and respect. (35)

Academic David Round paints a more effusively positive view of colonial history, arguing that “[o]urs is not a history of resented invasion, or of an imposition of an unwanted religion. Europe and its culture and religion offered an escape from a way of life dominated by war, slavery and cannibalism” (36). Stuart C. Scott similarly exonerates settler society as having a beneficial, rather than negative, influence on Māori society in his backlash book *The Travesty of Waitangi* (1995). Tellingly, Scott’s book was a huge success, selling 18,000 copies in 11 months, suggesting that his views resonated with wider society (*Travesty after Travesty* 8). Such perspectives are still widely held, as evidenced by public commentary via talkback radio and letters to the editor. For example, Gavin Buxton espouses the benefits of colonisation in a letter to the editor in the *Listener* in 2004, arguing that “colonisation is starting to look like the best thing that ever happened to Ngai Tahu” because Māori now have land ownership enshrined in (European) law in perpetuity whereas retaining possession of land previously required military defence. A slightly earlier letter to the same publication argues that contemporary grievances ignore the benefits of European colonisation, suggesting that “the ‘grievances’ now costing the taxpayers heavily are relatively mild compared to the atrocities committed, Maori against Maori, prior to 1840” (Hipkins).

While defences of hegemonic versions of history tend to be articulated by commentators who reject revisionist readings of colonial history, criticisms of their indirect influence on national culture, in the form of Māori assertions of exclusive indigeneity and biculturalism, come from commentators both receptive and hostile to revisionist histories. Michael King pointedly endorses the notion that settlers are as indigenous as Māori. He emphasises in “Being Pakeha” that both early Māori and

nineteenth-century settlers “were immigrants to these islands,” as were their cultures, and argues that “[t]he fact that one of these peoples has been here longer than the other does not make them *more* ‘New Zealand’ than later arrivals” (9; original emphasis). Opinion pieces in newspapers and magazines have expressed similar views. Poet Brian Turner asserts that claims that Māori are the only people indigenous to New Zealand are “tiresome” and a form of “bigotry,” before declaring: “I am indigenous... Recognise the worth and strength – and the reality – of hybridisation” (34). To assert that New Zealand is now culturally hybrid, a combination of Māori and settler cultures, implies that the two cultures have naturally had an equal influence on each other. An idealised fusion of Māori and settler cultures (and therefore lack of significant cultural difference), as supported by evidence of Māori and settlers *spontaneously* coming together as one or sharing one another’s cultural traditions, is often postulated as justification for settler indigeneity. However, *formal* articulations of cultural hybridity or, as it more commonly known, biculturalism, are more frequently criticised as politically correct misrepresentations of the national culture, revealing the hollowness of such claims.

The reason why bureaucratic attempts at biculturalism are often derided as ‘social engineering’ is the potential for biculturalism to challenge the dominance of settler culture in national identity. Claudia Bell’s *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pakeha Identity* (1996) analyses some facets of settler identity as demonstrated by national events in the 1990s, suggesting that New Zealand culture is, in fact, vigorously produced by, and modelled on, settler society. The instinctive distinction of ‘Māori’ from ‘New Zealand’ (or, conversely, the conflation of ‘New Zealand’ with ‘settler’ culture) in discourses that resist biculturalism reveals the essentially Eurocentric basis of

contemporary national identity. For example, Stuart C. Scott suggests in *Travesty after Travesty* (1996) that the popularity of his first book was evidence that “very large numbers of New Zealanders bitterly resent the extent to which Maori influence has permeated every sector of the national social life” (8). Don Brash’s Orewa speech, which precipitated the National Party’s meteoric rise in political polls, relied on similar assumptions. He argued that “a distinct South Seas race of New Zealanders” with a “multi-ethnic heritage” is emerging and that racial identity is consequently less important to New Zealanders. Such an argument essentially claims that New Zealand identity is not influenced by any particular ethnicity or culture, in order to defend the dominant Eurocentric formulation of national identity from the cultural influence of Māori. The paradoxical basis of such an argument is obscured by the way in which the widely held beliefs that national identity must be culturally unified (or monocultural) and that settlers have no culture³ frame settler culture as the logical and neutral foundation of national identity.

The perception of settler defences of hegemonic understandings of colonial history and national identity as a ‘backlash’ against decolonisation implies that such understandings have been overturned or rejected. Yet the historical and cultural perspectives of ‘backlash’ discourse are not obsolete. The similar cultural motivations of backlash and mainstream cultural discourses often make it difficult to distinguish between them. Michael King’s “ethnic autobiographies” are clearly sympathetic to revisionist histories yet they implicitly resist the influence of these histories on the national culture for the same reasons that Stuart C. Scott and David Round, more obvious proponents of the cultural backlash, resist any move towards decolonisation (White 4).

The way in which Brash garnered widespread public support with his Orewa Speech reveals how so-called backlash values are embedded in an allegedly decolonised mainstream culture: he acknowledged colonial injustice, yet defended colonial history; he acknowledged an independent Maori culture, yet championed a monolithic national identity. The difficulty in distinguishing between backlash and mainstream cultural discourses is evidence of the ongoing cultural relevance of ‘backlash’ perspectives.

‘Re-colonisation’

‘Backlash’ discourse defends key principles of recolonisation that have traditionally sustained settler belonging and appear to have been rejected by mainstream culture. The core recolonial tenets defended in backlash discourse are, firstly, the belief that, while colonial settlers can be celebrated as having heroically forged contemporary New Zealand, historical practices of colonisation have no enduring cultural significance and, secondly, the belief that New Zealand is a European cultural space. Analysis of the assumptions of contemporary nationalist discourse reveals that it is still invested with these beliefs. However, these principles have been refined in a way which ostensibly satisfies the cultural demands of decolonisation while ultimately sustaining the cultural status quo. That is, while contemporary formulations of national identity supposedly accept the veracity of revisionist histories, they defuse their potential by denying the relevance of colonial conquest to the present and the contemporary importance of ethnic identity (thereby denying the need for economic or cultural redress). Such beliefs are frequently articulated through the idioms ‘It’s in the Past’ and ‘We’re all Kiwis’ (the latter is also sometimes phrased as ‘One NZ’, as inscribed on the plaque placed on One

Tree Hill). These sentiments tacitly legitimate and re-assert the cultural dominance of settlers. The similarity between the cultural messages of backlash and mainstream discourses is indicative of how backlash discourses defend an older, but not jettisoned, view of history and identity. Raymond Williams's theorization of hegemonic culture provides a useful framework for conceptualising the relationship between backlash and contemporary nationalist discourses as successive manifestations of an intrinsically colonial culture. In this way, an allegedly decolonised nationalist discourse, that is, a discourse perceived to be free of colonial inheritances, is actually engaged in a cultural project of 're-recolonisation'.

The extent to which colonisation is dismissed as irrelevant in mainstream culture is evidenced by the prevalence of this belief in political, media, and mainstream forums. Don Brash espoused such a sentiment in his Orewa speech to substantiate his claim that the Treaty of Waitangi was of little contemporary relevance. He argued that "[n]one of us was around at the time of the New Zealand wars. None of us had anything to do with the confiscations," and suggested that "[t]oo many Maori leaders are looking backwards rather than towards the future" and "into this new century as a modern, democratic and prosperous nation". This is indicative of the belief that while revisionist histories may have validity, the history they recount is irrelevant to the present. The immediate rapid rise in National's popularity with voters (a 16% increase) is evidence of the mainstream appeal of such sentiments (Slack 13). Cultural discussion in the media similarly espouses the view that objectionable aspects of New Zealand's colonial past are not relevant to the present. *Listener* editor Pamela Stirling questions the place of the Treaty of Waitangi in political policy, asking "[d]o we really want ... [a] nation driven through the rearvision

mirror?” (5), and Brian Turner argues in an opinion piece that “it is not ignorance of the past that makes most people unwilling to forever make amends, it is a belief that little of benefit is to be gained from it” (34-5). The pervasiveness of the belief that colonial conquest should be consigned to the past resonates in public forums, such as Letters to the Editor in local papers.⁴ One example is a letter belittling criticism of the history of English colonization as “morbidly ruminating the sins of our distant forefathers” (Robinson). Even some Māori support such a view. A 2002 *New Zealand Herald* series on public attitudes to Treaty of Waitangi settlements suggested that one-quarter of the 110 Māori interviewed felt that the grievances being pursued in the Waitangi Tribunal were “in the past”, with one respondent saying “[w]e should leave things in the past and move on” (Collins).

The suggestion that national identity is more important than ethnic identity also neutralises the significance of revisionist histories by arguing that New Zealanders are now a largely homogenous cultural group. For example, a letter to a newspaper argued that “[t]he Treaty did not make us ‘one people’, but intermarriage, social mixing and cultural exchanges have tended to do so and it would now be quite impossible to divide us by race” (Dungan). Another letter to the editor maintained that Māori “must be honest and face up to the fact that they are New Zealanders, as are all Europeans who have descendants here going back 150 years or more” (Durrant), while another argued against sending a special Māori group to London for the dedication of the New Zealand Memorial because “we’re all New Zealanders” (Donald). The strength of such sentiments in New Zealand is evidenced by the 2006 census in which 11.1% of respondents (429,429 people) identified their ethnicity as ‘New Zealander’ or ‘Kiwi’ — making them the third

biggest ‘ethnic’ group after European and Māori (Eaton). The belief that a monocultural national identity has superseded ethnic identity has implications similar to those that dismiss the relevance of history but goes further, rejecting any justification for biculturalism.

A schism between recolonial cultural perspectives and decolonised historical perspectives underlies these ‘It’s in the Past’ and ‘We’re all Kiwis’ sentiments. These perspectives do not contest the veracity of revisionist histories, instead simply dismissing problematic aspects of colonial history as irrelevant to the present and future of New Zealand. Therefore, attempts to support contemporary articulations of national identity with references to the past must somehow evade acknowledging colonialism. This is often achieved in mainstream culture by valuing more recent history over contact history (that is, colonial history prior to the cultural dominance of settlers). Since contact history problematises the perceived historical and contemporary cultural accord between Māori and settlers, contemporary nationalist discourse often makes reference to events in the first half of the twentieth century, such as the World Wars, as the basis of New Zealand identity. For example, settler preference for celebrating comparatively unproblematic recent history is evident in widespread indifference to Waitangi Day on the part of settlers⁵ yet an increasing reverence of ANZAC Day as a day of national significance.⁶

The suggestion that national identity has largely supplanted ethnic identities assumes that ‘Kiwi’ identity is a product of both Māori and settler culture, with colonisation perceived as a process of economic, rather than social and cultural, conquest. The tendency of exhortations to focus on national identity over ethnic labels to implicitly champion a Eurocentric view of national identity is often concealed by their ostensible

opposition to racial discrimination. For example, a letter to the editor asserted that “[c]ommitment to the nationhood of our country must supersede anything as meaningless as skin colour” (Judd) and a campaign by Gerry Brownlee (who was Opposition Spokesman for Māori Affairs at the time) implored New Zealanders to declare their ethnicity as New Zealanders, since to write Caucasian or European would “perpetuate the myth that we are ethnically divided” (Boniface). These seemingly postcolonial sentiments actually maintain a settler-dominated formulation of national identity and constitute an ongoing process of cultural colonization. A 2003 anti-discrimination campaign supported by the Human Rights Commission that employed the ‘We’re All Kiwis’ sentiment dressed a postcolonial issue with mainstream cultural rhetoric to acquire cultural currency, underlining how hegemonic culture mediates between recolonial cultural perspectives and postcolonial imperatives.

The way in which assertions of national identity employ anti-discrimination rhetoric associated with anti-colonialism to reassert settler cultural dominance is suggestive of the complex interaction between backlash, mainstream, and anti-colonial cultural perspectives. Raymond Williams’s account of the cultural processes of hegemony is useful for examining how recolonial principles are incorporated into consecutive nationalist discourses in a way that responds to contemporary cultural concerns. The manifestation of recolonial values in a variety of cultural texts and a succession of cultural perspectives since the 1880s exemplifies Williams’s argument that social experiences are interpreted through dominant but not always clearly or consistently articulated cultural meanings and values as well as abstract and clearly articulated principles of ideology. The prevalence of recolonial values is as much a product of

undefined cultural and social forces as the result of individuals having a conscious ideological investment in principles of recolonisation. This is because in a hegemonic culture relations of domination and subordination permeate the “whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experiences and common sense” (Williams 109).

This account of the way in which hegemonic culture comes to represent reality mirrors the pervasiveness of recolonial discourses in the New Zealand context. John Newton has described the seemingly incongruous influence of cultural nationalist rhetoric on Polynesian poet Alistair Campbell in the 1950s, arguing that the dominance of cultural nationalist poetics provides Campbell “not only with a ‘natural’ default idiom, but with an audience readily able to appreciate it” (28). Cultural nationalist ideology continues to function as a default idiom, as is revealed in reviewer Catharina van Bohemen’s comment that the photograph of Denniston on the cover of the novel *Heart of Coal* (the sequel to *The Denniston Rose*) reminded her of Ruth Dallas’s poem “Photographs of Pioneer Women” (9). This interpretation of a colonial photograph according to a mid-twentieth century poem invested with recolonial principles in an allegedly decolonised twenty-first century cultural context demonstrates that recolonial understandings of colonial history are so pervasive as to have permeated all temporalities. The recolonial perspective is so dominant that it constrains the imaginable meanings of history, as is evident in the fact that van Bohemen suggests that texts and images, both fictional and non-fictional, denote recolonial perspectives. Rather than the expected relation of the fictional representing the factual, a genuine historical photograph signifies a fictional poem about an historical

photograph (9). The collapse of temporal distinctions in interpretation and the constraints on imaginable meaning reveals how recolonial values are refracted through cultural discourses until such a perspective comes to be self-evident ‘reality’.

However, as suggested by the difficulty in clearly discerning backlash from mainstream discourse, hegemonic culture should not be seen as monolithic or static but as a “realized complex of experiences, relationships, and activities, with specific and changing pressures and limits” (Williams 112). Core principles of recolonisation are not passively dominant but constantly being “renewed, recreated, defended, and modified” in order to contain the power of counter-cultural discourses (112-113). Contemporary New Zealand culture descends from earlier cultural traditions such as recolonisation, cultural colonisation, and cultural nationalism, incorporating recolonial traditions that underpin hegemonic culture and discarding those incompatible with the demands of anti-colonialist discourse. Williams has argued that the traditions that are adapted to the contemporary context sustain the dominance of a specific group because they form “a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present” and create “a sense of *predisposed* continuity” (116; original emphasis). The refining of these residual traditions for the contemporary cultural context often leads to opposition (or backlash) from people who consider themselves ‘ordinary’ or ‘mainstream’ on the grounds that ‘normal’ cultural and social experiences are being suppressed or overlooked. But backlash discourses that defend hegemonic histories and criticise moves towards biculturalism are defending recolonial principles that have already been incorporated into the dominant culture. In this way, decolonising and backlash discourses are both active influences on

hegemonic national culture, with backlash discourses constraining the extent to which the hegemonic culture is able to respond to the pressures of decolonisation.

Williams's account of hegemonic culture as a balance between the cultural continuity and power offered by historical traditions and the demands of alternative cultural discourses – a balance that sustains the cultural status quo – explains how colonial inheritances continue to underpin an allegedly decolonised New Zealand culture. Nationalist discourses, such as cultural colonisation and cultural nationalism, have been shaped since the 1880s by recolonial principles refined for each era's cultural context. Contemporary mainstream attempts to sustain dominant understandings of national identity by appealing to anti-racist sentiment or acknowledging colonial injustice yet denying its contemporary relevance are emblematic of the balancing act that underpins the refining of recolonial principles. Analysing how the portrayal of colonial history in *Tamar*, *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* sustains hegemonic understandings of national identity reveals the continuity between recolonial and contemporary formulations of New Zealand history and identity. Since colonial history is being presented as the basis of national culture, such fiction cannot simply avoid colonial history or deny its relevance, as hegemonic national discourse does. Therefore, an analysis of such fiction exposes the complex processes of containment⁷ that sustain hegemonic understandings of national culture. The way in which these novels meet backlash and mainstream (and possibly even liberal) cultural requirements underlines the limited cultural impact of revisionist histories on national identity and the extent to which colonial inheritances underpin New Zealand identity.

Notes

¹ In this thesis the term ‘settlers’ refers to European New Zealanders of both the nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first century to provide a clear continuity between discussions of colonial and contemporary society, as well as maintain consistency with the central argument of this thesis: that European New Zealanders’ sense of localised identity generally relies on effacing the origins of colonial settlement and constitutes a perpetual act of settlement. I retain the authors’ choices of identity labels in quotes from the novels and other sources.

² Māori groups, such as the Pacific People’s Anti-Nuclear Action committee and Te Whanau a Matariki, also supported the anti-nuclear cause but challenged other settler peace groups by arguing that the issue cannot be resolved until the “land and cultural rights of Maori have been recognized” (Clement 119). While some groups were resistant to considering such issues, the national network of local peace groups, Peace Movement Aotearoa, had “an inclusive approach to peace by focusing attention on issues such as structural violence, sexism, racism, and the rights of indigenous peoples, as well as on nuclear catastrophe” (114). An article by Doug Craig first published in *Peacelink*, the magazine produced by Peace Movement Aotearoa, and entitled “Fighting Against a New Colonialism” argues that the peace movement must recognize Māori cultural rights and the reality of both historical and contemporary colonialism.

³ Commentators such as David Round have suggested that any coherent and harmonious society must, at base, be “monocultural” (40). Historians have also suggested similar ideas, with Peter Munz arguing in a negative review of Anne Salmond’s

revisionist history *Two Worlds: First Meetings Between Maori and Europeans 1642-1772* (1991) that: “[e]very single community alive today ... is the result of either violent or peacefully gradual repression or absorption or amalgamation of smaller, earlier communities. One way or another, cultures in conflict eventually cease to be in conflict and as time goes by even multi-cultural societies become mono-cultural” (71). The argument that European New Zealanders do not have a culture (or do not have a ‘real’ culture) can be found, for example, in several writers’ contributions to Michael King’s *Pakeha: The Quest for Identity in New Zealand* (with even the title suggesting a lack of identity; 1991). Chris Knox suggests that Māori “have their own language and art forms and we only have second-hand ones” (196-7), while Rosie Scott relies on personal experience to discuss what it means to be a European New Zealander due to “the absence of a long Pakeha tradition, or the bedrock of hundreds of generations of shared experience” (172). The belief that national identity must be monocultural and the belief that settlers have no culture are often associated with very different political responses to revisionist histories, opposing and accepting. However, both have cultural resonance in mainstream discourses leading to their conflation in nationalist discourse, as capitalised on by politicians such as Don Brash.

⁴ The quotes from letters to newspapers in this section span several years preceding and following Brash’s Orewa Speech and as such are responses to a variety of current events, revealing the centrality of the two sentiments identified to understandings of national identity.

⁵ For example, in 2007 United Future leader Peter Dunne drafted a bill to establish a New Zealand Day in addition to Waitangi Day, citing a Research New

Zealand study that found only 55% of New Zealanders considered Waitangi Day significant (“Dunne Pushes Cases for New Zealand Day”). When the data was broken down according to ethnicity, 73% of Maori considered the day meaningful compared to 36% of settlers (“Dunne Pushes Case for New Zealand Day”).

⁶ For example, in recent years ANZAC Day has enjoyed increasing attendance at dawn ceremonies (McLean), with media coverage suggesting ANZAC Day is seen as a day of national significance. A number of articles have been published around ANZAC Day in recent years that argue that the Worlds Wars fostered a unified national identity, implicitly suggesting that ANZAC Day should be celebrated as a national day (for example, see the articles by Bernard Carpinter, Michelle Sutton, and Stephen Jewell). Public opinion seems to reflect the mood of media coverage. Gordon Pennefather wrote in a letter to the editor that Chris Trotter’s criticism of this changing view of ANZAC day was ignorant, asserting that “[t]he annual service is the only national event that unifies the entire nation”. South Taranaki RSA president Jim Te Wiki was reported in an article in the *Taranaki Daily News* as agreeing that Anzac Day was New Zealand’s unofficial national day, although the dominance of settler culture in public celebrations of national identity was revealed in Te Wiki’s concern about opening the dawn service in Hawera with a Maori welcome (Sutton).

⁷ The term ‘containment’ is used in this thesis in keeping with Stephen Greenblatt’s analysis in “Invisible Bullets” of “the relation between orthodoxy and subversion” in Shakespeare’s plays (23). Of course, while Greenblatt suggests that purposefully evoked subversive elements are ultimately suppressed, or contained, out of political necessity, I suggest that unwanted and unsettling (but foreseeable) aspects of

colonial history are contained in these novels to sustain a hegemonic depiction of New Zealand identity.

Chapter Two

An Empty Landscape: Strategies of Historical and Cultural

Evasion

The difficulty in sustaining a hegemonic view of national identity in light of wide-spread awareness, however reluctant, of colonial injustice is that such an identity stems from a history tainted by colonial conquest. As discussed in Chapter One, the impact of revisionist histories on national identity has been defused by asserting that the emergence of an original, culturally hybrid 'Kiwi' identity effaces the significance of the earlier colonial conquest of Māori land and cultural marginalisation of Māori. The discrepancy between the genesis of the nation and the emergence of a national culture embodies the slippage Jonathan Lamb has identified between the “dating of cultural and historical starting points” (352). The origins of settler identity, related as they are to the imperialism of settlement, become trapped between settlers' British heritage and the moment of their arrival in New Zealand. Lamb describes the contradiction as “that of an origin slipping away into the patterns of an imperial (and therefore alien) history; and that of an origin suddenly announced and violently appropriated at the expense of indigenous communities” (352). The way to resolve such conflict is either to recognise the past as a source of “unwelcome inheritances” or to assert “a declaration of independence from the past” with “an act of originality” (353). Just as settlers have articulated a unique indigenous identity in response to the destabilising threat of decolonisation, the legacy of colonial history for national identity is similarly neutralised with an act of originality. The

frequent assertions that ‘It’s in the Past’ and ‘We’re All Kiwis’ establish an original national identity assumed to supplant the colonial past and ethnic identity.

The complexities of origins are deflected in the historical narratives of *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* with a selective perspective of history that reaffirms hegemonic formulations of national identity. The colonial origins of New Zealand identity are distinguished from colonization by employing particular temporal and geographical settings that render nineteenth century Māori society and the processes of colonization invisible. The temporal setting common to all four novels capitalises on the process of passive cultural colonisation in New Zealand in the 1880s and 1890s that marginalised the effects of colonisation on Māori society and rendered New Zealand a settler cultural space. The cultural specificities of the South Island geographical setting of *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* similarly facilitate a monocultural depiction of colonial New Zealand that sustains a Eurocentric view of national identity. The almost uniform portrayal of colonial history in these novels through the 1880-1900 and South Island settings reveals how the legitimacy of hegemonic formulations of national identity relies on eliding the history of colonisation and evading the cultural presence of Māori.

Temporal Setting

The Denniston Rose, *Tamar*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* are all set between 1880 and 1900 so that the narratives locate the origins of the New Zealand nation within colonial history rather than the beginning of settlement. This temporal setting facilitates a hegemonic depiction of national history and identity because it was an

era relatively free of perceptible cultural conflict and tangible acts of colonisation that, if included in the novels, could undermine the validity of British settlement and subsequent understandings of settler history and identity. The lack of overt conflict in this period combined with demographic changes to enable settlers to establish the economic, social, and cultural foundations that underpin contemporary New Zealand society and identity. *The Denniston Rose* and *Tamar* are settlement narratives that describe the characters' immigration to a new location, the establishment of a new life in the colony/settlement, and a burgeoning sense of community. Situating such a settlement narrative within the 1880-1900 setting enables these novels (even *Tamar*, which ostensibly acknowledges Māori displacement) to portray the arrival and cultural presence of settlers as unrelated to the physical displacement and dispossession of Māori. The employment of the same historical context in *The Love Apple* also facilitates a largely monocultural depiction of colonial New Zealand but replicates late nineteenth century assumptions that associated Māori with an archaic past and settlers with a prosperous future. In contrast, *The Cost of Courage* locates an ahistorical narrative within an established settler community so that European settlers seem to naturally belong to New Zealand. The historical occlusion of *The Denniston Rose* and *Tamar*, the assimilationism of *The Love Apple*, and the ahistoricism of *The Cost of Courage* perpetuate recolonial principles that justify the consignment of unsettling colonial history to the past.

Prior to the 1880s the workings of colonisation were visible, as were Māori responses and the scale of conflict between settlers and Māori. Initial stages of colonisation in New Zealand, including the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the establishment of British systems of governance, and the acquisition of Māori land by and

for immigrating Britons met both Māori resistance and acceptance (Head 97). But since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi there had been considerable conflict between Māori and settlers (and the settler government) over land ownership, culminating in the New Zealand Wars in the 1860s. Britain's increasing disinterest in defending settler interests, and the tenacious valour with which Māori fought, destabilised initial settler confidence in the unbridled promise of the colony's future (McIntyre 338-9). However, by the 1880s recolonisation had recast the settlers' (somewhat tenuous) victory in the New Zealand Wars as evidence of the superiority of imperial might in suppressing Māori resistance to successfully colonise New Zealand (Belich *The New Zealand Wars* 17).¹ This view of the wars was validated with a myth of conquest that exaggerated settlers' war successes while underestimating the number of Māori victories in the wars (16). A belief in the unmitigated success of colonisation prevailed in the minds of settlers, despite continued Māori resistance in the 1880s and onwards in King Country and Northland, and settler-Māori clashes at Parihaka and in the Urewera.

The notion that cultural conflict had been successfully suppressed to pave the way for the establishment of settler society masked the influence of demographics in marginalising Māori within the colony. By 1881, due to the influx of immigrants following the end of the New Zealand Wars, the European population of New Zealand numbered half a million, outnumbering Māori and helping to suppress Māori resistance (Belich *Making Peoples* 278). Along with the huge increase in the European population, a steady decline in the Māori population solidified the social and cultural dominance of settlers and bolstered assumptions about European superiority. The economic impact of war and the influence of introduced diseases on the Māori population became clear

around this time with the Māori population declining until 1896 (249). Concomitant with the decrease in the Māori population was the rise of local-born settlers who outnumbered immigrant settlers for the first time in 1886 (Sinclair 31). The growing numbers of local-born New Zealanders were celebrated through the establishment of New Zealand Natives' Associations throughout the country (31). The Natives' Associations were short-lived but the self-assured labelling of local-born European New Zealanders as 'natives', only recently a term used solely to indicate Māori, is suggestive of how Māori were now on the periphery of the settler consciousness.

The increase in the settler population, combined with developments in communications (such as the telegraph and telephones) and transport technology (including shipping and rail), facilitated the development of a settler-dominated economy by the 1880s. The increase in European-style farming and the development of steam-driven coastal shipping facilitated trade between settler regions and settlers were no longer dependent on local Māori for trade (Belich *Making Peoples* 250). Furthermore, farming compounded the effects of demographics in marginalising Māori since it was most successful in regions that had previously been dominated by autonomous Māori, with settler dairy farming displacing Māori economically and geographically (251). The introduction of refrigeration fuelled export dairy farming so that agriculture became a central pillar of the national economy (and national culture) in the 1890s and beyond. The establishment of the farming economy contributed to the assimilation of Māori by supplanting Māori sources of income in a way that forced Māori into a settler-dominated economy.

The ideological recasting of the colony's history and the development of settler-dominated economic and social networks was a passive form of colonisation that solidified the settlers' cultural position in New Zealand. The process of colonisation had shifted from a physical to a cultural practice and as such was disguised within the seemingly benign establishment of settler society. The dominance of the settlers after the New Zealand Wars combined with the diminished financial and technological capacity of Māori to contest British settlement and a widespread Māori policy of disengagement strengthened settler belief in the legitimacy, authority, and primacy of British settlement (Belich *Making Peoples* 248). In this way, the Māori cultural presence became peripheral to settler understandings of New Zealand, enabling New Zealand society to be organised according to settler cultural expectations and a national identity primarily based on settler culture to emerge. It is this colonial era that popular fiction capitalises on to portray a culturally familiar national identity untainted by the history of colonial conquest.

In *The Denniston Rose* the main character, Rose, arrives in the middle of a stormy night with her mother Angel at Denniston, a small coal-mining settlement situated on Rochefort plateau 1800 feet above the West Coast. Reaching the plateau via a coal-wagon on the Denniston Incline, a system for transporting coal, their journey seems symbolic of the arrival of settlers in New Zealand. The reference to the prow of a ship when Con the Brake and the hook-man see Angel "com[ing] up inside the wagon, clinging to the leading side as if it were a ship's prow" is suggestive of the first settlers' arrival by sea in the new colony (21). The shock of arrival felt by Rose and Angel during their initial days in Denniston also mirrors the experiences of the first settlers. They have arrived in a place that is wildly different to the home they have left behind and that does

not match their expectations. They had thought that Angel's partner, Jimmy from Cork, had established himself in Denniston and would be able to support them but they find that he has been unemployed since one of his arms was amputated in a work-related accident. Consequently, he does not have a regular or sufficient source of income, is living in a part-tent/part-cave structure away from the Denniston community who are increasingly hostile toward him, and spends most of his time sleeping and drinking. For Angel, it is a struggle to obtain sufficient food for her and Rose to survive from the barren land through raising chickens or attempting to grow vegetables (or attempting to seduce the local men). This sense of unfulfilled expectations and hardship is similar to the first settlers who thought they were migrating to a land already settled and ready for farming, but were disappointed to find an unrefined and often inhospitable landscape in which they initially struggled to produce enough food to feed themselves (Belich *Making Peoples* 338-341). The pioneering subtext suggests it is an empty land, rather than Māori, that must be conquered, enabling the presence and dominance of settler society to be depicted as uncontested and therefore legitimate. The fledgling settlement at Denniston grows throughout the course of the novel as first Angel and Rose and then English miners arrive on the Hill. The social and cultural life of the settlement flourishes along with the population, establishing a cohesive community at Denniston and a shared sense of identity unique to those who live on the Denniston plateau.

Deborah Challinor's *Tamar* similarly depicts a settlement narrative within the already established colony. The first instalment in an historical trilogy, New Zealand history is employed as a chronological framework for a dynastic saga, with the trials and triumphs of Tamar and her family representing those of the embryonic nation. A narrative

of immigration, adjustment, and burgeoning identity is situated within the 1880-1900 time-period in *Tamar*, with an orphaned Tamar immigrating to a disorganised colonial Auckland where she falls prey to the relaxed social hierarchy of colonial New Zealand. After extracting herself from a disastrous marriage, Tamar eventually recovers her sense of self, remarries and relocates to the Hawke's Bay where she has five children. Tamar's experiences of migration, her involvement in creating a community and her resultant sense of identity are a microcosm of the process of British settlement in New Zealand.

A familiar account of settlement in settler cultural mythology emphasises the bleak future ahead of settlers if they stayed in the crowded British Isles and their bravery in migrating and establishing a life in New Zealand (for example, see Stuart C. Scott's *The Travesty of Waitangi* or Michael King's "Being Pakeha"). The experiences of settlers are considered to have produced a unique character and, eventually, a sense of belonging. Tamar's settlement experiences mirror such a narrative with initial bereavement and financial hardship leading to the decision to leave Cornwall. Her resilience and bravery during the voyage and her initial struggles to adjust to the new colony are symbolic of how settlers are celebrated as New Zealand's brave forebears, with their actions contributing to contemporary understandings of the New Zealand character. The subsequent establishment of a familial community that includes connections to local Māori and a sense of identity native to New Zealand is the final step of settlement, since Tamar is now native to New Zealand. While the narrative of *Tamar* describes the effect of colonisation on Māori, it nevertheless evades the history of conquest. This privileges a hegemonic settlement narrative that valorises the bravery of settlers and overlooks how

the arrival of settlers displaced and dispossessed Māori to legitimate contemporary formulations of national identity.

In contrast, *The Love Apple* portrays Māori as unproblematically assimilated into an established settler society. Colonial New Zealand in *The Love Apple* appears to be largely monocultural. The level of intermarriage (with Huia's grandmother, mother, and Huia herself all marrying settlers) and the absence of any cultural conflict portrayed between Māori and settlers suggests that Māori naturally assimilated into settler society. The settler community is culturally dominant with Māori society being supplanted by the settlers, as suggested by the way Huia's life with her father and, later, with Geoffrey, seems to preclude any engagement with her iwi (whom she visited as a child when her mother was still alive). Entering settler society seems to require exiting Māori society so that, even as Māori and settlers interact effortlessly with each other, settler culture is naturally dominant. Settler dominance in *The Love Apple* seems natural given the portrayal of Māori society as unstable, increasingly fragmented, and largely unaffected by (and therefore not resistant to) British settlement. Early in the novel Huia remembers her now deceased grandmother, Nanny Rina, asserting that despite settler belief to the contrary Māori are "[t]he owners, the lords and ladies of this place" and "the ones in charge" (39). However, the depiction of Hokitika in *The Love Apple* suggests otherwise. Nanny Rina (and, seemingly, Māori resistance) is dead and Huia's fervent aspiration is to emulate settler upper-class culture, not contest its presence. Huia dreams of being photographed for *Argus Annual* or *Illustrated London News* looking "[s]ad and lovely as the Empress Elizabeth of Austria" (36) and after her marriage to Geoffrey Hastings she demands a lifestyle befitting "a lady," including fashionable clothes, servants, and a wet-

nurse (136). This depiction of Māori resistance is similar to the recolonial assumption following the New Zealand Wars that Māori only offered fleeting, disorganised and unsustained resistance to colonisation.

The significance of pioneering history and Māori in *The Love Apple* closely mirrors that discernible in the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century desire to preserve Māori and pioneer history, as articulated, for example, in *Illustrated Magazine* (Stafford and Williams 131). The pioneer (or in the case of *The Love Apple*, settler society) is presented as the cultural precursor to contemporary New Zealand while Māori represent “a past incompatible with the present” (131). As the only character presented as Māori, Huia’s death toward the end of the novel suggests that settler society has completely supplanted Māori. Geoffrey and Huia’s son’s Māori ancestry is barely recognisable, so that while Oliver suffers prejudice from Hokitika schoolmates privy to local knowledge about the identity of his mother (199), his move to Christchurch is an escape from his Māori heritage (245). Furthermore, Geoffrey assuages his shame at having a part-Māori son by reasoning that “[d]ividing people up according to the past or their skin colour, setting them above or below or against each other, were ugly, staining things. Wasn’t there something fine and freeing in thinking that his son was one of a new people, a fresh creation?” (138). Geoffrey’s attempt to articulate a new, pure origin for his son reflects late nineteenth century predictions of a new New Zealand race, upon which the legacy of Māori would be a “golden tinge” (O. N. Gillespie qtd. in Belich, *Making Peoples* 248). The assertion that New Zealanders are ‘a new people’ constitutes what Lamb calls “a declaration of independence” (353) from the past, mirroring the present-day attempt to dilute the contemporary significance of colonial injustice

valorising national identity as representative of both Māori and settlers. The way in which Geoffrey's thoughts echo the historical assumptions of the era in which the novel is set yet reflect current cultural concerns reveals the ongoing cultural influence of recolonial principles in contemporary culture.

The Cost of Courage offers the most comprehensively recolonial vision of colonial history. The novel depicts an already established settler community and is not organised along a timeline — no dates are mentioned in the novel, nor are any major historical events.² In fact, it is not evident when this novel is set unless one reads the book's blurb which reveals that the novel is set in 1881. The historicity of the setting is indicated by the way the lifestyle and customs of the community are clearly presented as 'old-fashioned' and outmoded. The use of archaic language, such as "We none of us know our day of reckoning" (13) or "lying abed all the while" (19), is one way in which the text indicates the setting is 'historical'. The lack of modern technology, such as electricity, and the reliance on horse and cart for travel also reinforces that this is an 'historical' novel. Since *The Cost of Courage* is not constrained by a tangible chronology, a sense of timelessness and constancy infuses the narrative so that the community depicted appears to have always lived in Reefton — to even perhaps be native to New Zealand. The depiction of colonial New Zealand in *The Cost of Courage* in the 1880-1900 setting embodies what Stephen Turner has described as the settler desire "to make the peoples, place and history all of a piece" ("Being Colonial/Colonial Being" 59).

The use of the 1880-1900 time period in recent popular historical fiction enables the cultural dominance of settlers to be depicted as uncontested, benign, and natural since the process of settlement *appears* complete at this time, even though a passive process of

colonisation was establishing the cultural dominance of the British settlers. On one level, using this temporal setting enables the novels to engage with colonial history yet avoid portraying cultural conflict and injustices, such as the appropriation of Māori land, the displacement of Māori, and visible Māori resistance, that were more manifest in the decades preceding 1880. On a more complex level, the historical sleight of hand achieved through using the 1880-1900 setting enables the novels to depict conventional understandings of colonial history and national identity without explicitly contesting the veracity of revisionist histories. The consignment of colonisation to a vague and irrelevant prehistory through an occluded depiction of colonial history in *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, *The Cost of Courage* and *Tamar* reflects how recolonial principles continue to underpin contemporary culture despite official acceptance of and mainstream exposure to revisionist histories that problematise hegemonic views of history.

Geographical Setting

Geographical location is just as important in these novels when it comes to depicting a hegemonic view of national identity through colonial history. *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* are all set on the West Coast of the South Island (*Tamar* is the exception, being set in Auckland and the Hawke's Bay in the North Island). The South Island location has a colonial history that legitimates a view of British settlement as uncontested by Māori. Furthermore it is invested with cultural nationalist mythology that sustains the belief that New Zealand culture is the product of the settler conquest of the land. The specific demographics of the West Coast afford a view of settlement as occurring in an empty landscape and the socio-economic specifics of West

Coast settlement further distinguish settlers from the processes of colonisation. Tensions between different British cultures are emphasised in these novels in a manner that paints the English as imperial colonisers and distinguishes Irish, Scottish, and Cornish settlers from the colonial displacement and cultural colonisation of Māori. In this way, locating these historical novels in the South Island seems to corroborate the cultural belief that the displacement and marginalisation of Māori did not underpin the establishment of settler society and subsequent formulations of national identity, sustaining the vision of a largely Eurocentric 'Kiwi' identity as an organic development.

The South Island has a colonial history markedly different from that of the North Island, due in large part to its geography. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans it had a significantly smaller Māori population than the North Island, with far fewer iwi, due to the inhospitable climate. There were Māori living throughout the island but in far smaller numbers than in the north and parts of the island were unoccupied. The arrival of settlers en masse from the 1850s onwards meant that Māori were quickly outnumbered in the South Island, as suggested by census figures in 1881 that found that while only 8.6% of New Zealand's population was Māori, 17.5% of the North Island population was Māori (Belich *Making Peoples* 250). Southern Māori were overwhelmed by the mass arrival of settlers enticed by the gold rush and this, along with the widespread confiscation of land and a tribal emphasis on intermarriage with settlers as a means of gaining power to negotiate with settlers, contributed to the social, cultural, and economic subordination and marginalisation of Māori (254-257). Belich has suggested that between 1874 and 1901 the Māori community in the South Island declined further, constituting from 0.5% to 1% of the South Island population (250). Consequently, the colonial history of the South

Island is comparatively free, at least from a non-Māori perspective, of cultural conflict since there was both less interaction between the two peoples and less competition for resources and land that would bring them into contact and, potentially, conflict. The South Island is therefore an ideal location for depicting a hegemonic view of colonial history because its specific colonial history more easily sustains the myths that colonisation was mostly peaceful and that New Zealand is predominantly culturally European.

The depiction of colonial New Zealand in *The Love Apple* reveals how the southern landscape facilitates a view of New Zealand as culturally European, with the description of the landscape in various parts of the island suggesting that colonisation primarily involved the transformation of an alien but empty land. The North Canterbury high-country station where Geoffrey's sister-in-law, Sybil, works as a governess is described as alien and isolating. It is described as surrounded by hills "stretching into the horizon in an ocean of crumpled humps, ragged peaks and sharp escarpments" (149), and Mrs Powell feels that living on the isolated station is as familiar as living on "the moon: nothing but scrubby hills, wretched sheep, rough men and servants forever giving notice" (156). Once domesticated, memories of the untamed land are romanticised such as in the following description of Christchurch:

[t]he ancient trees – totara, kahikatea and matai – felled, the swamp domesticated. Weeping willows and soft lawns have replaced the ragged clumps of flax. Rowing boats and imported ducks paddle where once the

pukeko flicked night-coloured plumage and the feet of Maori passed on their way to battle, or in search of pounamu. (237)

This passage acknowledges how colonisation has transformed a native landscape previously occupied by Māori but the reference to Māori ‘passing through’ the area implies that this has not greatly impacted on or been resisted by Māori. The only conflict in the South Island is class conflict and the hostile land becomes a means for social punishment rather than a source of conflict. For example, when Geoffrey’s sister-in-law Sybil moves to a North Canterbury high-country station, her employer, Mr Powell, describes how his marriage to Mrs Powell, “a Warwick from the Hawke’s Bay” (157), when he was only the “son of a Bristol carpenter” upset her family so much that they shipped them off to the remote South Island station (158). But, as made clear by the description of Christchurch prior to settlement, the untamed South Island landscape has a certain cachet in cultural mythology.

This view of the wild landscape as alienating yet, in retrospect, romantic is similar to how, as noted in Chapter One, cultural nationalist writing employed the history and geography of the South Island to naturalize the presence of settlers. John Newton argues that “[t]his is the history on which nationalism seizes in order to establish its legitimating ground, superimposing this contingent local narrative onto a grimly romantic landscape, as if the landscape itself could account for it” (26). This popular historical fiction capitalizes on the mythology surrounding the South Island, depicting the pioneering attributes of settlers as stemming from the harsh landscape. For example, the story of *The Denniston Rose* depends on the isolated and hostile landscape. While the landscape is

overtly described in negative terms, as a “desolate” (18), “cold” (61), and “flat bony land” (84) that is perpetually shrouded in mist (65), a latent romanticism underpins this description because only those characters who learn to love the land truly belong there. Rose and Totty Hanratty both come to feel that Denniston is their home, with the land providing them with a sense of belonging that they did not get from their families. For example, Totty identifies with the “wilful and contrary” Denniston landscape, rejecting the suffocating respectability of her family in Westport to run away to Denniston with her socially unsuitable husband-to-be (46). Similarly, despite being initially outcast from the Denniston community on account of her parents’ behaviour, Rose comes to consider Denniston home so that when forced to move with her mother to Hokitika, she returns to Denniston in the middle of the night determined to live there (365).³ Totty and Rose’s experiences within the unreceptive landscape are depicted as forging a unique, original identity. The continuity between the approach of cultural nationalists in the 1930s and contemporary popular fiction writers underlines how colonial inheritances continue to underpin formulations of national identity despite the political and cultural influence of revisionist histories.

The West Coast setting of *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* further strengthens a view of colonial history as largely empty of interaction between Māori and settlers. A variety of tactics were used to acquire Māori land and while legal sales were used to acquire some land, much North Island land was acquired through the introduction of legislation by the settler-led government that effectively forced Māori to sell land (McAloon 62-66). In contrast, the South Island was bought in huge blocks, including the Kemp purchase (South Canterbury and Otago) in 1848, the

Arahura purchase (the West Coast) in 1860 and the Kaikoura purchase in 1859, prior to the arrival of most settlers (Oliver 52). These land sales were contested with Ngai Tahu sustaining “a tradition of claim and grievance” from the time of the first purchase in 1844 but there was little outright combat between Māori and settlers over land, in stark comparison to the North Island (Oliver 50). There was the ‘Wairau Incident’ in 1843 over settlers surveying Māori land (Belich *Making Peoples* 205) and there had been some resistance by Māori in North Otago at Omarama in 1877 but otherwise the New Zealand Wars did not occur in the South Island (Belich *Making Peoples* 255).

The census statistics in the last quarter of the nineteenth century and the widespread practice of intermarriage might seem to suggest that Māori were no longer a significant or distinct group within the South Island but Belich has pointed out that the numbers are deceptive for two reasons. Firstly, “the number of Pakeha neighbours mattered more to particular Māori groups than the total”, that is, such statistics do not represent the actual ratio of Māori to settlers in particular regions and are therefore not necessarily suggestive of the relationship between Māori and settlers (*Making Peoples* 250). Māori were concentrated population-wise in particular regions of the South Island, namely, Kaikoura, Kaiapoi, Banks Peninsula, Lake Ellesmere, the Otago Peninsula, Foveaux Strait and Westland (96). Secondly, such statistics obscure how even though “[d]emographic, economic and social swamping” had marginalised Māori, “even in its South Island stronghold, it had not assimilated them, or destroyed them as a distinct group” (257). As indicated by cultural conflict in Omarama in 1877, Māori did resist settler dominance in the South Island and retained a distinctive cultural identity (255). It is therefore curious that there is no mention of the West Coast iwi, Poutini Ngai Tahu, in

the depiction of Reefton, Hokitika, and Denniston in *The Cost of Courage*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Denniston Rose*. However, since the West Coast was a hub for the coal-mining and gold-digging industries, these settings can more convincingly sustain a monocultural view of colonial New Zealand in which settlers are largely removed from conflict over land.

The fact that the South Island was partitioned and sold in large blocks means that the majority of settlers in the South Island did not own land but were dependent on employers. Consequently, the geographical setting of recent historical fiction obscures how the settler presence was related to Māori dispossession. *The Denniston Rose* is set in Denniston above Westport, *The Love Apple* is set in Hokitika, and *The Cost of Courage* is set in Reefton and these townships were all built on the strength of the gold digging and coal mining industries (Belich *Making Peoples* 372). While the sale and/or requisition of land was contested by Māori in the South Island, settlers on the West Coast were seemingly uninvolved in the acquisition of Māori land. The West Coast was dependent on mining industries so that the majority of settlers on the West Coast worked for employers (as do the miners at Denniston in *The Denniston Rose* and Black Point in *The Cost of Courage*) and did not acquire land as they often lived on their employers' land. Gold diggers, whose industry underpinned the establishment of Hokitika, were similarly removed from issues of land ownership yet dependent on the land. The fact that many settlers on the West Coast (apart from mine owners) did not own land or rent from the Crown means that their presence (and implicitly that of all colonial settlers) can be depicted in *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* as unrelated to the questionable acquisition of land and the accompanying displacement of Māori.

The fact that the characters do not own the land they live on enables the depiction of the settler transformation of the land to afford a seemingly unproblematic sense of belonging and identity. Philip Fisher has drawn attention to the way that aspects of geography such as climate and terrain influence residents' way of life (or culture) by affecting both their means of survival (i.e. the fertility and accessibility of the land and/or resources) and their everyday experiences (*Still the New World* 34). The different physicality of the West Coast and the influence of that on settler communities are most obviously utilized in *The Denniston Rose* and *The Cost of Courage*. In *The Denniston Rose* the miners live on a plateau above the town of Westport that is removed from any of comforts of civilization. No plants can grow because of the shallow soil, the weather is harsh and unrelenting, and the residents risk losing their lives or their livelihoods due to disasters such as cave-ins or fires. Furthermore, the miners and their families are literally trapped on the plateau, which is only accessible via an 1800 foot near-vertical journey on the Denniston Incline. Similarly, in *The Cost of Courage*, Alice and Sam Kenyon are forced to move to the mining community at Black's Point where they live in a tent throughout a cold West Coast winter and, just as occurs in *The Denniston Rose*, experience the main occupational hazard of mining, a mine cave-in. While the pioneers are generally associated with earlier periods of New Zealand's history than the 1880-1900 setting of these novels, the West Coast setting enables a traditional justification for settler cultural dominance – the pioneering spirit – to be evoked through the portrayal of mining communities in a wild environment. By adjusting to the harsh climate and transforming the terrain of these coalmining townships colonial settlers 'earn' their right to be in New Zealand, evoking the cultural mythology of the 'South Island Myth' that

saw settler engagement with the hostile and obdurate landscape as underpinning an emergent sense of belonging for settlers.

The demographics of British settlement in the South Island setting also obscures Māori-settler cultural conflict with intra-British conflict, suggesting that many British settlers were also victims of English colonisation and imperialism. The enmity felt by the Scottish, Irish, and Cornish toward the English is reflected in these novels, as is the historical propensity for the English to settle predominantly in Canterbury, the Scottish in Dunedin and the Irish in the West Coast. The characters in *The Denniston Rose* are either Irish or their cultural identity remains unstated, except of course for the “immigrant” English miners who arrive after the other residents of Denniston; these new arrivals are unpopular outsiders who are seen as attempting to impose their own ethics and politics on the mining community (for example, they introduce unionism to the mine and their Methodist religious beliefs foster a puritanical work ethic). In *The Cost of Courage* the community at Black’s Point is mostly Cornish and the predominant cultural identity of the township at Reefton is unstated but clearly culturally British. Although the settlers are depicted as being united under the ‘British’ identity in contrast to other cultures such as the Māori or the Chinese, there seems to be a clear preference in these novels to avoid identifying the primary characters as English.⁴

In *The Love Apple* the West Coast is largely populated with Irish settlers and the section of the novel set in Christchurch proceeds with a comment on the Englishness of Christchurch, as well as its class divisions and pretentiousness:

It was to be another England. Better. Jack as good as his master. But there are still masters. The Canterbury squirocracy, princes of the sheep run, men who own farms large as counties ... The merchant classes make do with schools reflecting the grammar model ... a faux public school offers education for the sons of wealth and privilege. Gentlemen's children, for the most part, though who can be entirely sure? Take that boy from Hokitika: father said to be Anglo-Irish gentry, now a tomato grower, and as for the mother ... with some parents it is better not to enquire. (236-7)

The Canterbury squirocracy are the (presumably English) landowners who have benefited from the sale of South Island in large chunks, while the majority of settlers are landless, employed in the industries sustained by that land, and socially scorned by the moneyed landowners. The characterisation of land-owning English settlers as regarding non-English and/or working class settlers as inferior alludes to the way in which the latter have often been victims of English imperialism. Not only were they often treated as inferior in the new colony but burgeoning industrialisation in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries led to many peasants being forced off the land and into towns and cities in order that such land be enclosed into large aristocratic estates to be used for large-scale farming (known as 'the enclosures' and, in the case of Scotland, the 'Highland Clearances'; Richards 148). This emphasises the complexity of colonial histories, highlighting how other British settlers were often victims of English imperialism in much the same way as Māori.⁵ The focus on intra-British conflict also effectively obscures how the presence of British settlers, nevertheless, displaced Māori.

The narratives of these novels tacitly register the superficiality of this deflection since the cultural similarities between the English and other British settlers are greater than the differences. It is a shared British culture that underpins the structure of settler society and informs the burgeoning sense of national identity in these novels. The dominance of settler culture in colonial New Zealand reflects the centre-periphery model of empire, which locates the English at the centre and the indigenous on the periphery. As settler societies flourished this dynamic became more complicated, since settlers and their descendents, being neither English or indigenous, occupy an intermediary zone in this dynamic. As discussed in Chapter One, the drive in nineteenth-century New Zealand to emulate and, subsequently, transcend the qualities of Britain reflected settler cultural anxiety about being alienated from the cultural centre and a need to therefore constantly prove settlers' Britishness. Concomitant beliefs that Māori were a 'dying race' reveal how settlers often considered themselves superior to Māori by dint of a closer connection to the cultural centre. However, while the centre-periphery model of empire in New Zealand was complicated by settlers' intermediary status, and a cultural distinction can be quite authentically drawn between the settlers and the English, a distinction between their imperialist objectives cannot. Growing political independence from Britain was not a rejection of the imperialist centre-periphery dynamic. The push by settlers from the 1850s to take control of governance issues and the process of cultural colonisation from the 1880s onwards placed settlers at the centre and Māori on the periphery of settler society. The displacement of settler-Māori cultural conflict by intra-British conflict in these novels defuses the potential for the Māori cultural presence to problematise depictions of history and national identity.

The geographical setting of the West Coast of the South Island facilitates the depiction of settler history and identity in these novels as the natural and uncontested basis to current formulations of national identity. These novels' reliance on the South Island setting mimics the preoccupations and assumptions of cultural nationalist mythology, revealing how recolonial myths continue to pervade contemporary understandings of history and identity in an allegedly decolonised cultural context. By evading the Māori cultural presence *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage* are able to focus unproblematically on the characteristics of the settler culture and a nascent culturally European national identity that is recognisably a forebear of contemporary national culture. The fact that the culturally sustaining portrayal of history common to these novels is defined by its absences rather than its presences embodies what Alex Calder has described as the typical New Zealand experience, that of "com[ing] to a place where you might expect the past to be remembered, but what you actually encounter is the record of a kind of forgetting going on" (68). The temporal and geographical settings in these novels therefore facilitate a type of historical and cultural evasion rather than articulation. However, the historical selectivity of the temporal and geographical settings provides a blank canvas upon which New Zealand can be depicted as culturally European.

Notes

¹ Of course, the cultural significance of the New Zealand Wars was soon diminished due to the success of recolonisation in framing New Zealand as European. Belich describes the ways in which the wars were reconstructed to meet expectations of settler military power, thereby legitimating settler dominance, but notes that the “final safety net was to forget” (*The New Zealand Wars* 321). As Jock Phillips has noted, the New Zealand Wars did not have a lasting influence on settler mythology and despite almost thirty years of battling over land in the North Island the wars were quickly forgotten (93). This forgetting is likely a result of the settler desire for a sense of belonging untainted by the legacy of colonization. The fact that the land were long known as the ‘Maori Wars’ points to how settlers retrospectively diminished the importance of the wars in colonial history.

² This is in contrast to the other three books which all mark different sections of the narrative with dates or casually mention the timing of events within the narrative.

³ In *Heart of Coal* Rose’s affection for the Denniston landscape is even more apparent. Upon leaving the plateau with her husband she slips into a deep depression that does not pass until she returns to Denniston.

⁴ The association of the English with colonisation is most clearly expressed in *Tamar*. The English characters display stereotypically imperialist attitudes (211-12) while non-English characters, such as Tamar (who is Cornish) and her husband Andrew (who is Scottish), voice feelings of being oppressed by the English. It seems likely that Scottish or Cornish ethnicities are preferred because they are both considered to have been

oppressed by the English in much the same way as the Māori, as suggested by Tamar's response to Kepa's dismay at Joseph fighting an English war: "I'm Cornish, remember, and I have about as much respect for English authority as you do" (458). The association between the English and colonisation is made overtly clear in *Tamar*, possibly since the North Island setting necessitates containing the influence of revisionist histories on the depiction of settler history and identity.

⁵ In *Being Pakeha: An Encounter with New Zealand and the Maori Renaissance*, Michael King also emphasizes the similarity between his Celtic ancestors' experiences of English imperialism and those of Māori. He states that the Gaelic language was "obliterated by the cultural imperialism of the English within the United Kingdom. Our tribalism too had died with the brutal attacks of Cromwell and Montrose. The final violence to the Celtic pattern of our ancestors' lives had been accomplished by the combination of rural famine with the industrial revolution in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, which uprooted our ancestors from the villages and clan territories where their families had lived for centuries. It drew them to towns and cities that promised work and money, and delivered (for most of them) slums, poverty and squalor. The process was almost identical to that which the Maori were to undergo in a more concentrated manner a century later" (199).

Chapter Three

Settler Spaces: Sites of Cultural Articulation

Land is at the heart of understandings of New Zealand culture. As Christine Prentice has noted, representations of particular landscapes as central to nationalist mythology are so “pervasive and frequent as to have become naturalised understandings or representations of nationhood” (112). It is assumed that rather than constituting subjective cultural practices, landscapes such as the beach, the wilderness, and the farm have an objective significance (112). However, the land as it figures in national mythology is a cultural construction that tautologically substantiates visions of nationhood – as Eggleton words it, the landscape is “a state of mind ... a map of assumptions, desires, [and] projections” (7). An analysis of the wilderness, the pastoral, and the urban spaces reveals that landscapes central to nationalist discourse are sites reconstructed according to cultural mythologies that conceptualise all relationships in terms of a dominant/subordinate dynamic. The wilderness is an explicit reminder of the civilising influence of settlers, the pastoral is the embodiment of settler mastery of nature, and the urban is the manifestation of the triumph of reason. The dominance accorded to settlers in these understandings of particular landscapes implicitly frames New Zealand as a European cultural space. The employment of these three spatial settings in *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *The Love Apple* therefore tacitly communicates that New Zealand is culturally European, legitimating settler cultural dominance. An analysis of how they do so, even when the Māori cultural presence disrupts the monocultural portrayal of colonial

New Zealand, reveals that such dualisms descend from colonialism and continue to underpin hegemonic formulations of national identity.

Recolonial Inheritances: “The Logic of Colonisation”

In his Orewa speech, Dr. Brash asked what sort of nation New Zealanders aspired to build before making clear his own national vision with six references to being “modern”, a further six to being “prosperous”, and three to being “democratic”. His rhetoric conjures up a vision of the nation that is hard to criticise – appealing as it does to principles of progress, wealth and equality. But the implication of contrasting these aspirations with the contemporary political context is that bicultural objectives, that is, allowing Maori to have greater political and cultural say, will render New Zealand archaic, destitute, and undemocratic. The association of superior qualities with European culture (i.e. New Zealand culture) and inferior qualities with Māori culture is reminiscent of nineteenth-century colonial ideologies that perceived settler culture as naturally dominant. The legacy of such ideologies is still discernible in mainstream resistance to the cultural effects of decolonisation. For example, Don Brash complained that New Zealand is “not simply a society of Pakeha and Maori where the minority has a birthright to the upper hand”. Similarly, in arguing that settlers were also indigenous, Michael King protested, “[t]he fact that one of these peoples has been here longer than the other does not make them more ‘New Zealand’ than later arrivals, nor *give them the right to exclude others from full participation in the national life*” (“Being Pakeha” 9; my emphasis). Such comments reveal that national identity is understood according to a dominant/subordinate dynamic: if settler culture is not dominant, then Māori culture must

be; if New Zealand is not modern, it is primitive; if it is not perpetually flourishing, it is impoverished; if every political decision is not decided by the will of the people, it is dictatorial.

Such dualisms constitute what Val Plumwood has identified as “the logic of colonisation” (41). The binary logic of colonialism frames the relationship between humans and nature as oppositional. Rationality, power, and dominance are attributed to humans and irrationality, weakness, and passivity are ascribed to nature (2). Under this philosophical framework sentient humans define an assumedly insentient nature, which has led to various colonizing missions categorising not only wildlife and the environment as ‘nature’ but also certain groups of humans and certain human behaviours deemed inferior by the colonizers (4). The universalist perspective of colonialism justifies such actions because the colonisation of other peoples and their lands is perceived as the inevitable and beneficial conquest of reason over unreason. In this way, the colonial oppression or assimilation of indigenous peoples is established as not only natural but integral to progressing toward modernity and advancing human civilisation. Since the dominant culture is associated with progress, the subordinate culture is associated with regression. Therefore, attempts to destabilise the various manifestations of the dominant-subordinate dynamic in colonial cultures are frequently perceived as thwarting the economic and cultural progress central to the material and intellectual promise of modernity. In the New Zealand context, as exemplified by Brash’s comments, the increasing political and cultural influence of Māori is often resisted on the grounds that it will inhibit economic and cultural progress. Decentring settler culture and its colonial-influenced values and beliefs is inadmissible for hegemonic formulations of national

identity because the only recognisable (and therefore desirable) cultural focus is perpetual development toward the promise of modernity.

However, as revealed in the historicisation of colonial discourse in New Zealand in Chapter One, colonial culture can is not an invariable construct. Nicholas Thomas has criticised explanations of colonial culture as a “singular enduring discourse” based on a universal and rigid “discursive logic” (171). He argues that while there are significant similarities between different eras of colonial culture each has a “distinctive character that derives from the politics of identity in the present” (171). Therefore, the culture of colonialism can be conceptualised as “a series of projects that incorporate representations, narratives and practical efforts” (171). In this respect, Thomas’s conceptualisation of the culture of colonialism converges with Raymond Williams’s account of how historical traditions are selectively incorporated to substantiate the dominance of the hegemonic culture. Plumwood’s explanation of the ‘logic of colonisation’ is valuable for explaining how colonialism continues to inform nationalist discourses. She argues that the dualistic philosophical framework of colonialism perpetually generates various manifestations (and valuations) of dualisms to meet contemporary cultural and political needs (43). For example, reason/nature can be seen as a dualism rooted in ancient history but human/nature is associated with post-enlightenment philosophy. Plumwood identifies various related dualisms that descend from the dualistic framework, including human/nature, culture/nature, civilised/primitive, mind/body, and rationality/animality (43).

The ideological filament that connects contiguous colonial projects is the flexible yet sustaining dualistic structure of Western thought. Plumwood argues that the logic of

colonisation is “often preserved in our conceptual framework as residues” so that “[c]ulture thus accumulates a store of such conceptual weapons, which can be mined, refined and redeployed for new uses” (43). In the New Zealand context particular manifestations of such dualisms have legitimated the settler cultural presence and dominance in different contexts and in different ways. Furthermore, multiple forms of the human/nature dualisms, including civilised/primitive, culture/nature, and reason/nature dualisms, have been employed concurrently, pointing both to the pervasiveness of colonial logic and to its dynamic nature. Settler cultural dominance is even sustained by interpretations of the binary dynamic that appear to invert its usual hierarchical value. For example, the recent inclination to idealise Māori as closer to nature and lament the cold rationality of civilisation does not change the actual qualities attributed to each side of the dynamic, just their valence. Therefore, the association of Māori with timeless and unchanging nature can actually work against recognising the impact of colonisation because it is assumed that the Māori relationship with the land is so intrinsic as to be impervious to colonisation. Therefore, analysing the historical and contemporary influence of colonial dualisms in discourses of national identity reveals how residues of recolonial culture continue to sustain hegemonic understandings of New Zealand culture. It also exposes how such colonial dualisms have been reinterpreted in a way that successfully contains the cultural power of emergent anti-colonial cultural discourses. The fact that the same dualisms have frequently gained currency in liberal cultural discourses that are sympathetic to anti-colonialist views reveals the pervasiveness of New Zealand’s colonial inheritances.

The difficulty in analysing the manifestation of colonising logic in nationalist discourses is that a culture of pragmatism is often valued over abstract ways of thinking in New Zealand (as the laconic practicality of the ‘man alone’ figure bears witness to). Historian Miles Fairburn has attributed the difficulty of identifying the social structures of New Zealand identity to its formulation as the “ideal society” that “had little social content apart from the state” (151). Therefore, signifiers of national identity are not “social forms ... but the material manifestations of the way of life which is both advanced and idyllic” (151). This focus on material images over abstract articulations of New Zealand identity leads to a focus on

natural scenic wonders, natural abundance (massive wheat harvests, rolling pasture land, prize stock), the material rewards accruing to settlers (their homes), advanced technology (steam trains, steam-ships), and the multitudinous civilised amenities contained in New Zealand’s splendid public – principally government – buildings (modern hospitals, schools, town halls, libraries). (151)

However, while difficult to discern, settler cultural beliefs underpin the presentation of these images as representative of New Zealand identity. Fairburn’s description of the dominant images of New Zealand focuses on three settings: the wilderness, the pastoral, and the urban. While there are other significant landscapes in settler cultural mythology, such as the beach and the mountains, these three are fundamental to settler cultural mythology. The wilderness, pastoral, and urban spaces are invested with colonial

principles that have historically legitimated the settler cultural presence and continue to do so in the present.

The transformation of the New Zealand landscape by settlers was considered evidence of moral, economic, and cultural progress. These principles came to underpin an emergent ‘national’ identity in the early twentieth century and remain at the heart of contemporary national culture. The taming of the wilderness and the colonisation of Māori were considered material evidence of the superiority and benevolence of British culture in colonising and civilising New Zealand. The dominance of pastoralism by the turn of the twentieth century had purportedly created an egalitarian classless society, leading to claims New Zealand was a ‘Better Britain’. By the 1950s and 1960s New Zealand was “God’s Own” or “Godzone” with a thriving economy, increasingly urbanised population, and related high standard of living (Bell 30). Such mythology has been reworked and re-envisioned for the contemporary context: the conservation of wildlife and wild areas embodies New Zealand’s superior relationship with the environment; the shift to environmentally sustainable farming practices is evidence of New Zealanders’ greater affinity with the natural landscape; decolonisation has led to New Zealand’s urban centres being increasingly perceived as global, rather than uniquely New Zealand, spaces and, therefore, as evidence of New Zealand’s status as a modern nation. The continuity between these new and old formulations of identity is not only the landscapes onto which they are projected but the refined and redeployed colonial dualisms that underpin New Zealand understandings of these landscapes. The wilderness, the farm and the colonial urban settings employed in *The Love Apple*, *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar* and *The Cost of Courage* communicate that New Zealand is culturally

European because these spaces represent cultural progress through the dominance of settlers over nature. In this way, these historical novels legitimate the settler presence and re-inscribe settler cultural dominance.

The Wilderness

The valuing of refined civilisation over the primitive wilderness underpinned the settler transformation of uncultivated New Zealand land into familiar British landscapes. While the civilised/primitive dualism was central to colonial visions of the relationship between the colonial self and the indigenous other in various British colonies, such a binary logic, while informing nineteenth-century colonial beliefs to some extent (particularly cultural Darwinist theories regarding the future of Māori society), was less influential in the New Zealand context due to the different relations between Māori and settlers. The civilization/wilderness dualism (which, in any case, was always part of colonial ideology) provided an equivalent moral justification for colonisation and sustained colonial understandings of the relationship between settlers and the land as the conquest of an uninhabited and pristine land. Such understandings still underpin hegemonic formulations of national identity, as can be identified in populist New Zealand attitudes towards conservation and the image of the wilderness in national mythology. The significance of the wilderness setting to the narrative of *The Denniston Rose* reveals the cultural beliefs invested in this landscape and how the employment of the wilderness setting is one means by which New Zealand is demarcated as a settler dominated space in these novels.

The civilisation/wilderness dualism has long underpinned literary expressions of national identity. For example, Denis Glover pits labourers against an unyielding land in “The Road Builders” (1939):

An unremembered legion of labourers did this,
 scarring the stubborn clay, fighting the tangled bush,
 blasting the adamant, stemming the unbridled rush
 of torrent in flood, bridging each dark abyss.

Their tools were pitiful beside the obdurate strength of the
 land: (lines 5-10)

Thirty-five years later the allure of such cultural mythologizing still prevailed and in “Ohakune Fires” (1975) Lauris Edmond envisages the razing of hillside forests “in those days” as the pioneers conquering the landscape (2), describing labourers as “giants against the sky” (4), who, “grappling for mastery” (5), “forced a way to the ridge and stood / straight up to breast the trees / defeated” (10-12). The belief that Māori had been assimilated into settler society enabled their cultural presence to be erased from the landscape so that recreations of colonial history assumed that pioneering European settlers had civilized an empty wilderness. For example, David McKee Wright asserts in “While the Billy Boils” (1897) that: “*We had been where no one had been before us, we had / starved for days in the cold and wet; / We had sunk a hundred poles that was duffers, till at / last we come on a fairish patch*” (35-38; my emphasis).

The experiences of pioneers who transformed and cultivated a foreign and harsh landscape and subsequently established communities in New Zealand have long been appealed to as the real foundation of New Zealand identity. Glover suggested in “The Road Builders” that these forebears should be honoured more than the bureaucrats because they physically created the new nation: “These men we should honour above the managers of banks. / They pitted their flesh and their cunning against odds / ... / And on the payroll their labour stands unadorned by thanks” (14-17). New Zealand identity is still based on the cultural beliefs that underpinned this understanding of pioneering experiences as a battle between civilisation and the wilderness. The cultural continuity between colonial and contemporary New Zealand culture is best illustrated by comparing notions of wilderness. Monte Holcroft suggested in 1940 that the settler conquest of the primal wilderness was the victory of reason over nature: “Is it true, then, that contact with the wilderness has induced, not a spiritual humility, but a strong sense of superiority? ... And so the truth must be faced. Our grandfathers, and sometimes their fathers before them, passed through the primeval shadow and emerged from it as the founders of a nation with an innate empiricism” (Holcroft 156). Geoff Park has argued that contemporary mainstream understandings of the wilderness are still underpinned by such cultural beliefs. Quoting a 1985 Department of Lands and Survey Wilderness Policy that suggest the wilderness embodies “remoteness and discovery, challenge, solitude, freedom and romance” (qtd in Park, 189), he argues that attempts to protect the wilderness by keeping naturally dominant humans away from wildlife are ultimately still dependent on the civilisation/wilderness dualism (189). Responsibility and agency is associated with civilisation and innocence and passivity is encoded in wilderness, reflecting Western

philosophy's rigid divide between humans and nature (189). Therefore, the civilisation/wilderness dynamic continues to inform hegemonic understandings of national culture because the protection of wilderness areas sustains assumptions of settler dominance while attempting to undo the harmful impact of settlement.

The depiction of settlers in *The Denniston Rose* eking out a living on a “desolate plateau” (18), “a sea of mud and coal” where “[n]othing grows” (65) and “no bird sings” (93) embodies this cultural narrative of civilization versus the empty wilderness. The settlers feel stranded in a land both far away and entirely different from ‘Home’. Not only is the landscape bereft of trees, vegetation, running water, and birds, and the weather wild and wintry, but the residents are literally trapped on the plateau. The only entrance to and exit from Denniston is via the steep Denniston Incline in the coal wagons. The incline is “eighteen hundred feet in two near-vertical drops”, a journey so traumatic that many women, having made it up the Incline, do not leave for twenty years (22). Isolation from the Westport township means that the residents of the plateau are forced to be self-sufficient: the nearest doctors and police officers are in Westport and churches and schools do not exist on the plateau until the locals create them. This isolation from any of the familiar features, customs, and traditions of European society feeds the residents’ sense of living in the wilderness. In addition, the inability to bury the dead on the plateau because of the shallow soil means that the dead must be sent down the Incline to be buried in a Westport graveyard where their family cannot easily visit them (107). The settlers attempt to assert some control over the landscape by creating a bridle track off the plateau. The men working on the track feel that they are “using the[ir] hewing skills to tame their wild landscape; to make it serve them for a change” (188-9). The bridle track

connects Denniston with the outside world, situates it within a colonial map of New Zealand, and, akin to the civilising mission of colonial surveying, is a means by which the Denniston settlers are able to leave their “legacy on the ground” (Byrnes 72). However, this legacy is largely superficial. The inability to bury the dead *in* Denniston is suggestive of how the wilderness impedes the settlers from both literally and figuratively planting their history within the land, a point clearly articulated by a character who questions, “[w]hat kind of settlement can we build here without our dead?”(107).

The establishment of the Denniston mine is one way in which the settler legacy is literally embedded in the land, with the miners reconfiguring the very foundation of the landscape to reflect rationalist ideals. The organisation of the mine is conflated with the organisation of Western civilisation, with bords, pillars and cross-shafts forming an underground, uniform grid, a process described as “honeycombing your way through the vast seam of coal until a plan of it looks like New York city - or, if you like Westport itself” (94). The miners are described as literally transforming the wilderness into a familiar landscape based on ideas of rationality, order, and civilization. This restructuring of the wild landscape according to rationalist ideals echoes British colonists’ settlement plans. Early colonial town planners often designed towns using “the ‘standard’ rectangular grid of colonial settlement” that divided land into plots within a geometrically uniform grid “for ease of survey and to facilitate land sales” (Wilson et al. 11). This grid was superimposed on the landscape, often with little regard for the landscape’s natural features. The structuring of the underground coal mine in *The Denniston Rose* suggests a comprehensive transformation of the wilderness through rationalist ideals with the reshaping of the interior of the wild landscape corresponding to the transformation of the

Denniston plateau's exterior through the establishment of a township. This process seems to represent a more intrinsic civilisation of the wilderness than the veneer of civilization superimposed on the landscape with the settlement grid.

Yet, just as the colonial grid of settlement was inevitably adapted to accommodate local geographical features such as rivers, swamps, and hillsides, settlers are forced to accommodate an unpredictable landscape. The description of the mine as a paragon of civilisation immediately precedes the depiction of the “close” of an almost fully mined pillar of coal, revealing how little power the miners actually wield over their landscape (97). When a pillar has been almost completely mined the rock roof above the pillar collapses so that “[a]s the miners are working their way through the pillars, the mine is collapsing in behind them” (97). The speed at which a rock roof will collapse is unpredictable and the safety of the miners relies on the workers hearing the coal shifting and moving to safety. In the novel, the roof collapses suddenly and two members of the Scobie family die, trapped in the collapsed sandstone of the pillar roof after hesitating to check on the whereabouts of another miner. Mary Scobie's despair that her dead son's body is not “laid out” but “crumpled under a mountain of rock *like some animal*” reflects the entrenched cultural belief that to be as vulnerable to the whims of nature as animals, to lose dominion over the wilderness, is to be debased by the primitive taint of nature (107-8; my emphasis).

Paradoxically, despite the initial sense of cultural degradation, the literal interment of settlers within the land eventually fosters a sense of entitlement and belonging — and a determination to establish a settlement. Mary Scobie steels herself to campaign for fairer working conditions for miners after recovering from a long spell of

depression and grief after the death of her son in the Denniston mine by telling herself:

“‘[t]his is *your land now* and you will learn to walk on it’” (277; my emphasis).

Furthermore, the gradual development of a sense of belonging — of learning to inhabit the land — reflects both colonial assumptions that pioneers earned the land through civilising it and current day assertions that European New Zealanders have become indigenous to New Zealand through their historical connection to the land. It is suggested that the residents of Denniston “somehow mutated, like a tough breed of goats, into a race that actually enjoyed mist and cold and isolation” (18) and that a sense of identification was inherited by subsequent generations. For example, Totty Hanratty is described as “develop[ing] a taste for a landscape as wilful and contrary as herself, and [breeding] the flavour into her son’s bones” (46). The residents of Denniston have acclimatized to the environment to the point where they are no longer rootless migrants; they have forged an authentic connection to the landscape that means they could live nowhere else.

The taming of the wild landscape and the adjustment to the new landscape are the means by which settlers earn the right to the land but the legitimacy of the colonial settler presence is based on the illusion that the landscape is not only wild but empty. Māori are not acknowledged in *The Denniston Rose* as inhabiting New Zealand prior to European settlement; it is as if the settlers have arrived in a vacant land. The occlusion of Māori enables the narrative to locate settler identity within the landscape and avoid engaging with issues relating to the legitimacy of British settlement, implying that Māori simply did not occupy this area of New Zealand. Yet even as identity is forged through identification with a seemingly empty land the Māori presence haunts the landscape.

Turner has suggested that the colonial history of the land “is evident in a glance at the map, which shows the English names of the main population centers and Māori names everywhere else” (“Settlement as Forgetting” 23). Indeed, the map of Denniston provided at the beginning of the novel reveals this residue of colonial history, with Māori names for towns (such as Waimangaroa) and local geographical features (such as the Waimangaroa River) peripheral to Denniston. Therefore, the attempt to ‘forget’ the history of the area prior to the arrival of the settlers is not completely successful. The Māori cultural presence intermittently intrudes upon the settler-focused narrative only to be re-suppressed to sustain a depiction of history untroubled by the legacy of colonial conquest. For example, the potential for the Māori names of nearby towns and geographical features to highlight the presence of Māori prior to settlement is subverted through the anglicisation of the name ‘Waimangaroa’ to “Waimang” (42). The distorting and shortening of ‘Waimangaroa’ further occludes the Maori cultural presence (although, again, not entirely) by relegating its existence to an official paper record disconnected from the characters’ lived experiences of the local landscape.

The marginalisation of Māori in *The Denniston Rose* is illustrative of how the logic of colonisation defines the ‘other’ as “passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the ‘environment’ or invisible background conditions against which the ‘foreground’ achievements of reason or culture ... take place” (Plumwood 4). Indeed, the narrative of *The Denniston Rose* attempts to suppress how settlement is indelibly connected to Māori, although the fact that the establishment of Denniston was initially dependent on Māori assistance intrudes on the narrative. Con the Brake starts to mention some Māori from “the pa” who had been part of a gang cutting scrub in order to build the Incline but is

chastised into silence by his wife, who warns that he is not supposed to be telling “the entire history of the Incline” (85). As quick as the revelation that the establishment of the mine initially relied on local Māori labour and that, as suggested by the reference to a ‘pa’, there are still Māori living in the area emerges in the novel, it is suppressed as irrelevant. This continual suppression of the Māori cultural presence creates “the moral clarity of a clean slate” for this depiction of colonial history, since settlers are ostensibly establishing a life in an empty land (Fisher *Hard Facts* 29). Furthermore, the wilderness can be understood as “available to be annexed for the purposes of those supposedly identified with reason or intellect, and to be conceived and moulded in relation to these purposes” (Plumwood 4).

As Stephen Turner has pointed out, the attempt to overlook the indigenous presence “naturally exaggerates the discontinuity of [settlement] history” (“Being Colonial/Colonial Being” 59). While Māori are consigned to pre-settlement history, settlers are associated with modernity so that the history of settlement becomes a totalizing fiction in which the settlers alone are irrevocably connected to the Denniston landscape. The Denniston Incline is described as an “Engineering Masterpiece, Eighth Wonder of the Modern World” (22) and the emphasis on the modern world reinforces the idea that British settlement is civilizing the archaic wilderness. The mine is not only a masterpiece of human ingenuity but the harbinger of progress in the colony. The mine’s status as a symbol of modernity is suggested in the choice of the poem, *Prophetic Lines from Locksleigh Hill*, recited at the opening of the Denniston Incline. The lines:

For I dipped into the future

Far as human eye could see
 Saw the Vision of the world
 And all the wonders that would be... (46)

teleologically frame time as a perpetual progression towards increasing prosperity. Since the focus on modernity re-envisioned history as a teleological narrative, it appears as if settlers had always lived in Denniston, as evident in the historical contextualisation of the arrival of Angel and Rose:

Con the Brake insisted it was the worst storm of '82; possibly even since the mine opened, though that was hotly debated. There were, after all, plenty of good examples to argue over. Like the one in 1880, ... Or those terrible three days-January, was it? – the next year ... You couldn't have a worse storm than that. And they closed the Incline that time. (17)

Although this passage covers only two years the recounting of experiences and arguing over the dates and significance of past events creates the illusion that people have lived at Denniston for much longer and share a collective history and sense of belonging based on experiences with the landscape.

After the transformation of the landscape and development of community in both *The Denniston Rose* and its sequel *Heart of Coal*, a road that connects the residents of Denniston to the nation is finally built at the end of *Heart of Coal*. The road, a talisman of modernity with its connections to economic development, connects Denniston with the

outside world both socially and economically, dissolving settler feelings of alienation. However, the locals' sense of isolation is dissolved not only by freedom but by the emergence of a localised identity, as symbolized by Rose's emphatic declaration that she could not leave the plateau. Growing up in the landscape has forged a sense of belonging for settlers so that while the land is initially the source of settler alienation, it eventually becomes a source of belonging. Rose's suggestion that "you remember the best parts, of course" enables her to suppress the misery of the abuse she suffered as a child with the past being represented as relevant only in terms of how it positively informed the present (331). Such a view of history is emblematic of how the settler cultural consciousness is sustained by a dehistoricised view of settlement that suppresses and skirts the colonial conquest of Māori whilst celebrating the products of such colonisation. The cessation of the Incline in the Epilogue to the novel embodies this focus on the future; Rose declares that she does not wish to see the Incline's last trip since there is "[n]o point looking back", before "rais[ing] her hand, casually, as if to a passing friend, then continu[ing] on" (331). A teleological view of the future, with the civilisation of the wilderness representing the ineluctable march of progress, releases settlers from the tyranny of history as well as that of cultural alienation to sustain the belief that New Zealand is a European cultural space. However, Rose's remark about remembering "the best parts" tacitly admits that a process of forgetting – which logically must be preceded by remembering – is occurring; likewise, the settler focus on positive aspects of colonial history involves the perpetual suppression of unsettling aspects of colonial history that remain submerged in the settler cultural subconscious.

The Pastoral

Settlers were enticed to colonial New Zealand from the overcrowded British Isles through Charles Heaphy's descriptions (as an employee of Wakefield's New Zealand Company) of New Zealand as offering "a level playing field and boundless opportunity" for pastoralism (Edmond, Murray 109). The initial taming of the wilderness represented the success of civilisation. Coaxing the land into producing food and profitable resources through pastoralism was tangible evidence of the innate dominance of humans over nature, with the products of such dominance (such as economic progress and an alleged egalitarianism) substantiating assertions of New Zealand's cultural superiority. In spite of the fact that the majority of New Zealanders have lived in urban centres since the early twentieth century (Pawson 200) and increasing contemporary awareness of the ecological damage wrought by farming, pastoralism remains central to national mythology. This can be attributed to how the human/nature dualism has been refined in a way that responds to contemporary concerns yet still sustains hegemonic national mythology. An analysis of the pastoral setting in *Tamar* reveals that the pastoral landscape is invested with notions of settler culture dominance that legitimate the settler presence. The success of settlers in reshaping the land to rationalist and capitalist ideals tangibly reframes the land as a European cultural space.

The ideological agenda of pastoralism, as conveyed by the imperial government and the New Zealand Company, was "the wholesale implanting of capitalist social relations in New Zealand, beginning with the commodification of the land" (McAloon 66). It was quickly apparent that the land was a potential source of great wealth since it was nutrient and resource rich and could produce wool, meat and dairy products with

relatively little investment of labour or resources. While earlier extractive economies such as whales, seals, gold, and flax had often relied upon engagement with Māori for trade, the pastoral economy relied on the appropriation of Māori land (66). The drive for pastoral development introduced a cultural shift of focus from the moral transformation of ‘civilising’ the wilderness to an economic transformation of cultivating the land (63). Land was perceived as a passive object “to be bought, sold, and used as efficiently as possible” according to the rationalist principles of capitalist ideology, with the assumption that the land is always submissive to the natural dominance of humans (Dann “Losing Ground?” 278).

The establishment of pastoralism involved not only imposing British cultural ideals onto the surface of the land by reshaping the land into ordered paddocks and fields but literally reworking the local ecology to improve productivity. ‘Superior’ English species and means of farming were introduced into the landscape and indigenous species perceived as ‘unproductive’ and inferior were eradicated (Dann “Losing Ground?” 277). The economic focus of pastoralism is evident in *Tamar* in the description of Peter Montgomery’s farm. Montgomery is milling the kauri on his land in order to make his land productive; however the very transformation of the land is profitable for Montgomery who sells the felled kauri in Auckland since “[i]t won’t make [him] any money mouldering away in the bush” (164). Similarly, another settler Thomas Beck invests in Montgomery’s land because he hears “that’s a good little block of land. If Peter’s plans for its development come to fruition, [he] should see [his] money doubled” (185). This utilitarian view of the land is related to the settler cultural belief in the human mastery of nature and the benefits of modernity.

Cultural understandings of pastoralism are still focused on progress. As David Eggleton has pointed out, the ongoing significance of the farm to national mythology is as much a product of commercial jingoism as an organic public sentiment, with television advertisements celebrating “the myth of theme-park pastoral progress” as the basis for the superiority of New Zealand culture (22). The unreserved cultural valorisation of the pastoral tradition in New Zealand is to some extent at odds with the mounting ecological “evidence of treating the land like a factory” (Dann “Losing Ground?” 279-80). As the negative impact of farming on the landscape has become increasingly apparent, cultural certainty regarding the desirability of human dominance over nature has been destabilised, leading to an increasing focus on developing environmentally sustainable policies. However, the ideological continuity between the patriotic pastoralism of yesteryear and the burgeoning national focus on being ‘environmentally friendly’ is evident in the contemporary assumption that although human dominion can be negative, it is inevitable and therefore must be responsibly managed. The validity of the dominant/subordinate dynamic remains largely unchanged since the establishment of ‘environmentally friendly’ policies has ultimately devolved ‘dominion’ into ‘management’.

The entrenchment of this perspective in contemporary culture is discernible in public discourse regarding a contentious attack on environmentalism by the president of Federated Farmers of New Zealand in 2006. Charlie Pedersen argued that environmentalists were fostering “a quiet war of plants and animals against the human race” and “winding back the clock,” before suggesting that philosophical or moral environmentalist arguments are “in the realm of religion, not science” (Pedersen).

Pedersen's stance was widely criticised in public discourse, with many lay commentators expressing support for mainstream understandings of environmentalism. However, the ensuing public debate centred on ideological nuance rather than substance, largely rearticulating that the only alternative to progress is reversion to pre-rational faith-based beliefs. Suggestions in Letters to the Editor that Pedersen's views were "those of an Englishman living in the 19th Century" (Lockie), were emblematic of "the '50s" (Bothe), or were from "last century" (Jones) seem to suggest a tangible transformation in public attitudes towards nature. In fact, these rejections of Pedersen's ideas implicitly rely on an investment in the human/nature dualism. Environmentalism is being perceived in such discourses as another progressive step in humankind's mastery of nature, in contrast to the backward ideas of the past, as made clear by the comment in one letter that:

Charlie is borrowing from natural capital to run his business, as indeed we all are. If we bankrupt this planet, Charlie's predictions of "worldwide starvation" will become a certainty. The Sumerians, the Romans, the Mayans and the Easter Islanders all discovered this the hard way, making Charlie's accusations that environmentalists want to "turn back the clock" bitterly ironic. (Hansford)

Another letter even goes so far as to suggest that Pedersen will "find himself left behind as our society makes *real* progress" (O'Connor; my emphasis). The underlying similarities between Pedersen's and the public's perspectives are indicative of how the human/nature dualism remains integral to formulations of national identity. While earlier

formulations saw the intense productivity of farming in New Zealand as emblematic of economic progress, contemporary national culture celebrates the economic productivity and ‘clean, green’ image of contemporary pastoralism as evidence of both economic and cultural progress. Both versions rely on a cultural investment in the human mastery of nature.¹

Pastoralism reshaped the land into culturally recognisable and productive forms since it was assumed “that if one cannot see traces or signs of one’s own culture in the land, then the land must be ‘natural’, empty of culture” (Park 190). In effect, settlers developed a sense of belonging by making the land reflect settler values as much as through adapting to the land. The description of the landscape in *Tamar* encodes European cultural beliefs about unproductive, natural land and productive, cultivated land. The assumption that native land is uncivilised, unproductive, and ‘culture-less’ is evident when Tamar notes while travelling to her second husband’s farm for the first time that: “[t]he further they travelled from civilisation, the wilder the land became ... Some of it was in pasture but the greater amount was still untouched bush” (374). But the novel makes clear that the New Zealand wilderness is being slowly transformed according to European standards. The view of her first husband’s land from a ridge affords “panoramic views of the bush below, broken here and there by a patchwork of scrubby paddocks ... Peter’s block was not huge but it encompassed several acres of forest and open paddock” (137). Already the land is being reconfigured to resemble England with the establishment of orderly paddocks, as well as the introduction of English flora: “The bare winter branches of a climbing rose grew up the verandah posts and in front of the house was a large circular garden containing early daffodils, snowdrops, bright blue

lobelia and cheerful pansies” (137-8). The second-generation settler station of Tamar’s second husband, Andrew Murdoch, represents the success of this process. In one generation it has been transformed into an English-style property, with a “stand of tall English trees” on a track leading to “a grand two-storied, balconied home surrounded by beautifully groomed lawns and gardens” (375-6). The reordering of the landscape into culturally recognisable forms embodies the workings of cultural colonisation. New Zealand is being slowly transformed by the settlers into a culturally European space, legitimating the settler presence as evidence of cultural progress.

The cultivation of the land not only reorganised the land according to British cultural standards but introduced economic and legal frameworks that displaced Māori. Pawson and Brooking have pointed out how “colonisation linked the transformation of places and the construction of new landscapes ... with markets, sources of goods and European cultural ideas and legal frameworks” (Pawson and Brooking 7). The displacement of Māori from the colony economy is touched on in *Tamar* when Te Kanene notes that Māori coastal traders are denied access to steam-powered vessels in a bid to push them out of the coastal shipping business (187). There is also some indication of the consequent economic inequality between Māori and settlers when Mereana (Joseph’s aunt and guardian) is concerned that Tamar (Joseph’s mother) might try to draw Joseph back into her life with “promises of a privileged *Pakeha* life” (395). Despite the ostensibly revisionist perspective of *Tamar*, which openly notes the effect of colonisation on Māori, the most substantial source of economic inequality between Māori and settlers is not depicted. Settler appropriation and use of Māori land that was often only sold (although land was also confiscated) by Māori after various acts of settler

government legislation had economically and politically disempowered Māori within the settler-introduced capitalist economy is not acknowledged in *Tamar* (McAloon 62-63).

Drawing attention to the fact that the land on which Tamar's family lives and prospers was once Māori land would link national prosperity to Māori disempowerment, undermining the pure origins projected onto the purportedly uninhabited pastoral space in formulations of national culture. Therefore, while general reference is made in *Tamar* to Māori losing their land, the specific experiences of the iwi depicted in the novel, Ngāti Kahungunu, are overlooked. Te Kanene informs some settlers at a dinner party that his iwi's ancestral lands "reach from Wairoa to Wairarapa" (187) and it is made clear later in the novel that Te Kanene's family live near Tamar's second husband's station in the Hawke's Bay. Yet in the 1840s, the government forbade Māori from leasing land to settlers directly, enabling the Crown to purchase the Hawke's Bay from Ngāti Kahungunu since — having become dependent on the capitalist economy — the iwi needed income and now had little choice but to accept the low prices offered by the Crown in 1853 with the support of pastoralists (McAloon 62). Set in the 1880s, the narrative avoids acknowledging the loss of land with the phrase 'ancestral lands' since it is not clear whether Ngāti Kahungunu still owns that land or whether Te Kanene is referring to the iwi's traditional lands. This evasion is significant because Tamar's second husband's station is described as being bought in two lots in 1855 and 1862 (379). Explicitly acknowledging that Kenmore Station is likely situated on previously Ngāti Kahungunu-owned land and that Andrew Murdoch (and, therefore, Tamar) had benefited from Ngāti Kahungunu loss would undermine the legitimacy of Tamar's and her family's presence in the Hawke's Bay and the sense of localised identity expressed through these

characters.² The narrative implicitly registers the aspects of colonial history concealed within the historical narrative of *Tamar* when a settler at the dinner party is described as “deftly” changing the subject of conversation after Te Kanene refers to his ancestral lands (187). However, this haste to change the topic is rather enigmatic considering there has been no mention of land ownership and would be somewhat inexplicable for those readers unfamiliar with the specific demographics of both historical and contemporary land ownership in particular tribal areas. The destabilising influence of history is contained through occlusion.

The potential for the acknowledgement of colonisation to destabilise conventional understandings of national history and identity is also defused in *Tamar* through a utopian portrayal of race and class relations. A central belief stemming from farming mythology is that New Zealand’s pastoral heritage contributed to the social egalitarianism of New Zealand culture. The battle with the untamed landscape is perceived as forging a natural unity between settlers that ameliorated the class divides in Britain. Accordingly, the suggestion in *Tamar* is that while some settlers, mainly the fewer upper-class settlers, such as Peter Montgomery, nursed race and class prejudices, the predominant settler attitude was one of egalitarianism. For example, Tamar’s hired help on Montgomery’s farm, a young Māori girl called Riria, immediately becomes an ally in her struggle to cope with her abusive husband and they remain close friends for the remainder of their lives, neatly dissolving racial and class divides. The differentiation of ‘good’ settlers (such as Tamar) from ‘bad’ settlers (such as Peter Montgomery) — usually of British and English ancestry, respectively, as discussed in Chapter Two — enables New Zealand culture to be disassociated from the practices of colonisation. This

is evident in the depiction of the Boer War in which settlers are described as more egalitarian than the British, with the intimation that settlers no longer consider themselves British (479; 481). Furthermore, Tamar's part-Māori son Joseph identifies a similarity between the "British attitude towards Boer civilians" during the Boer War and the practice of relocating Māori after the New Zealand Wars "onto small reservations that would never be able to sustain them" (477). Attributing such cruel actions to "greed for land", Joseph suggests that "[i]n both cases, the British had been the protagonists" (478). The colonial displacement of Māori is acknowledged but depicted as unrelated to the settler presence by highlighting the alleged egalitarianism of the settlers in comparison to the rapacious British.

Paradoxically, given the suggestion that the imperialist British are responsible for colonial injustice, the narrative indirectly rationalises the dispossession of Māori with an inverted valuing of the civilised/primitive dualism. Geoff Park has described the nineteenth-century settler "need to see native ways as primitive, and Māori as ephemeral, unsuitable tenants of an otherwise vacant land that was desperate for cultivation" (190). The suggestion that Māori use of the land was primitive and ephemeral justified their displacement from the pastoral economy by drawing a strong association between nature and Māori and assuming that Māori therefore had no claim to the land. In comparison the association of Māori with nature in *Tamar* is framed in a positive light. Māori are portrayed as more connected to nature through tropes such having a more open attitude to sexuality and a sense of spirituality more attuned to the natural world. For example, Tamar notes a different cultural attitude towards courting couples that allows unmarried couples to share sleeping accommodation (361) and wonders "if she would get used to

the way Maori spoke about sex so casually and openly” (363). The depiction of Māori spirituality similarly indicates a strong connection between the natural world and Māori. When Tamar’s second daughter Brigid dies, Joseph explains the significance of a fantail nearby (according to Māori mythology the fantail accompanies souls to the underworld) and asks whether she can feel Brigid’s presence but Tamar struggles to “feel even a whisper of her daughter’s spiritual presence” (452-3). While this inversion of the civilised/primitive dualism is seen as a positive revaluing of earlier cultural assumptions, it also works to sustain settler beliefs that colonisation did not greatly impact on Māori.

The human/nature dualism casts humankind as dynamic and adaptive while nature is considered unchanging and timeless. The inversion of the human/nature dualism does not completely undo these assumptions so that associating Māori with nature means that the effects of colonisation can be dismissed as transitory and insignificant. Such a perspective is evident when an Aboriginal soldier, Gabriel, talks to Joseph about the effects of colonialism on the Aborigines. The capacity of colonisation to negatively influence a whole culture is diminished when he says that the conditions for Aborigines (that are described as worse than those of Māori) do not bother him because “My people are part of the land. We been there forever, and that won’t change. Ya can’t kill the land” (512; original emphasis). The notion that indigenous people have an indelible connection with the land, are more at one with nature, is a means of diminishing the effect of colonisation on Māori (as is the comparison of Aboriginal and Māori colonisation) and legitimating settler cultural dominance. The concurrent employment of a number of both traditional (human/nature) and inverted (civilised/primitive) colonial dualisms in *Tamar*

reveals the pervasiveness of colonial logic and how diverse and seemingly paradoxical manifestations are employed in response to various political and cultural requirements.

Even as the pastoral landscape is considered evidence of human dominance over nature, recent attempts to articulate an indigenous settler identity have often relied on inverting the human/nature binary to suggest that the pastoral landscape has initiated a localised sense of settler identity. New Zealand writers have long depicted rural life as symptomatic of the New Zealand experience, including Ruth Dallas, Denis Glover, and Frank Sargeson. More recent representations of the pastoral in mainstream discourses have suggested the land confers a kind of indigeneity on settler culture. Rather than simply seeing the pastoral experience as formative, the land itself is assumed to inform settler identity. But, as Simon Upton has argued, much of the land has been converted to pastoralism and bears “the legacy of a northwest European agrarian settler culture” (15). It reflects settler culture and identity and is shaped by an imported European, rather than indigenous, culture. While settler culture is influenced by its locale, its success in colonising and reconfiguring the land means that the pastoral is a European rather than indigenous cultural construct. Furthermore, attempts to invert the human/nature divide to provide an instantaneous settler indigeneity are not only ideologically inconsistent (ie. the idea that nature influences humans) but belied by the “irreversible embedding of human ecology in the land” (17).

However, the development of pastoralism is still perceived as contributing to the development of a localised settler sense of belonging and sustains a view of New Zealand as culturally European. Tamar’s experiences on the farm of her first husband, Peter Montgomery, and the station of her second husband, Andrew Murdoch, mirror traditional

understandings of settlers' emergent sense of belonging, with a connection between Tamar and the landscape slowly developing to the point that she considers New Zealand home. It is of significance that Montgomery's land is a first-generation farm while the second focuses on the domestic order of an established farm. Montgomery is depicted as a settler unresponsive to and uninterested in New Zealand or its land beyond its money-making potential. Furthermore, his dismissive and racist attitude towards Māori suggests he sees them only as impediments to his money-making plans. In contrast, Murdoch's Kenmore Station is evocative of respectable settlement that fosters an authentic connection with the land and local Māori based on egalitarian ideals. The narrative of *Tamar* rarely mentions the workings of Kenmore station, with the plot focused on the growth and experiences of the extended Murdoch family and friends. *Tamar* is focused on the shared life of the family with "[t]he politics of domestic order reflect[ing] a national order" (Fisher *Hard Facts* 88). The implication is that initial settlers motivated only by mercenary objectives, such as Montgomery, did not develop a life in New Zealand, as symbolised by Montgomery's death, and have therefore not contributed to a national identity. In contrast, the Murdoch family represents settlers who forged a connection with the land through the development of pastoralism, initiating a burgeoning national identity. The pastoral landscape is invested with cultural mythology that legitimates the settler cultural presence and the consequent development of a national identity. The employment of the pastoral setting in *Tamar* tacitly frames New Zealand as culturally European.

Urban Settlement

The urban landscape is rarely represented in contemporary articulations of national identity but, given that 85.7% of New Zealanders live in urban areas³ and the ongoing veneration of urban development as a symbol of progress, the urban space is still central to hegemonic understandings of national identity. The emergence of towns and cities in nineteenth-century New Zealand was an indicator of settler mastery of nature and the growing cultural dominance of settlers. It was also the means by which settler cultural dominance was perpetuated. The significance of the city to New Zealand identity has been more recently submerged in the national consciousness due to various cultural trends that idealise the ‘clean, green’ countryside over the unnatural urbanscape and value the uniqueness of New Zealand’s rural and wild landscapes over the perceived homogeneity of the globalised urban space. However, there is a clearly discernible cultural continuity between the values British settlers associated with the urban settlement and those detectable in the contemporary national consciousness. The city is considered the embodiment of reason, having repelled nature to its borders and controlled that which remains, and therefore reflects the success of colonisation and the progress of the nation. In this way, the urban setting is the most quintessentially and unproblematically European cultural space in nationalist visions of landscape and its employment in *The Cost of Courage* and *The Love Apple* enables these novels to tacitly communicate that New Zealand is culturally European.

Initial “Wakefeldian ideals” of colonisation were focused on the development of towns in order “to promote economic advancement, cultural stability, and political control” (Pawson 200). The establishment of towns was concomitant with the

establishment of a colonial economy since industries were dependent on the towns for trade links. Urban centres were the means for modernisation, connecting the colony to the wider world in terms of communication and trade, linking the colony's infrastructure, and politically and culturally connecting the colony's provinces. The physical construction of urban spaces was considered the embodiment of the triumph of reason in colonising nature and "[t]he making of urban places encapsulated and symbolised the taming of the 'howling wilderness'", 'the howling wilderness' being a phrase in wide use in nineteenth-century Otago (Pawson 201). The development of these urban spaces according to the ubiquitous colonial grid was emblematic of this desire to tame the natural landscape. Pawson has suggested that, aside from the alleged simplicity of such designs, the grid's function as evidence of the mastery of nature and the onset of modernity is the reason that it was used in geographically unsuitable spaces, such as hilly Wellington and Dunedin (203). In this way towns in colonial New Zealand were "bridgeheads of civilisation and assumed many of the attributes of modernity" (Pawson and Brooking 11).

Despite the widespread contemporary view of the city as a soulless and culture-less globalised space, the ideological investment in modernity that underpins conceptions of the city prevails in the national cultural consciousness. For example, the immediate responses of public figures and business owners to a five-hour power cut in Auckland on June 12 2006 appealed to notions of progress, with complaints that this would not happen in big cities overseas ("Many Businesses In For A Shock"). Auckland Mayor Dick Hubbard suggested that the power cut had damaged the country's reputation (Field) and even went so far, as did Heart of the City CEO Alex Sweeney, as to suggest that Auckland was in danger of developing a third world status ("Those Pavlov's Dog Lobbyists").

Suggestions that New Zealand will be seen as a third world country imply that New Zealand will be seen as primitive and undeveloped, underlining how cities are seen as vanguards of progress. Central to this progressivist discourse is the idea that progress has been achieved through the mastery of nature; the urban space is still conceived of as the embodiment of civilization and a space in which nature has been tamed and forced back.

The way in which the colonial urban settings in *The Love Apple* and *The Cost of Courage* communicate a Eurocentric view of colonial history and national identity is evocative of how urban spaces – even small towns – are culturally European spaces that reflexively legitimate the cultural dominance of settler culture in colonial and contemporary New Zealand. *The Cost of Courage* is set in Reefton, a small town on the West Coast of the South Island, which is presented as a cohesive, established, and culturally European community organised around the agricultural and mining industries, with the social life of the community being structured around church and traditional customs such as weddings and funerals. Combined with the aforementioned lack of dates in this novel, this depiction of Reefton means that the community seems to have always lived in this way and therefore appears native to New Zealand. In contrast, *The Love Apple* describes the origins of Hokitika. It is still explicitly presented, however, as an original, European space, a town that “leapt into existence” in 1864: “One day there was nothing but a forested river mouth and a beach covered with driftwood. The next, a calico encampment littered with sardine tins and broken bottles” (6). The arrival of settlers breathes life into this area. They also bring modernity – and its detritus in the form of discarded tins and glass bottles – as exemplified by the description of miners staying on to “build roads, clear paddocks, run cattle, or fell trees” so that by the 1880s the town

boasts the products of European rationalism: “jewellers, watchmakers, physicians, barbers and several photographers” (6). The idea that the land on which Hokitika stands was ‘nothing’ until the arrival of the gold-diggers reveals how the urban is understood as an original space, even though the land on which Hokitika was developed was likely part of another cultural map – that of Westland Māori who lived on the nearby Arahura river which was a renowned source of greenstone. Although the Hokitika community in *The Love Apple* is more clearly presented as a community made up of settlers with allegiances to distant homelands as well as the new colony, the alleged emptiness of the land enables the town to be conceptualised as a culturally European space.

The construction of the urban landscape as an original space configured on European culture is so successful that Māori are rarely recognised as an independent culture or society within urban settings, as is evident in recent popular historical fiction. The settler town of Hokitika assimilates Māori in *The Love Apple*, with an unstable and increasingly fragmented Māori society giving way to the dominant and cohesive settler culture. The only significant Māori character in *The Love Apple* is a culturally isolated young woman, Huia, who is assimilated into settler culture with scant suggestion that Māori might once have used, occupied or owned land now used by settlers. After the death of her grandmother, Huia lives with her settler father, and living within settler society seems to efface Huia’s connections with Māori society. Early in the novel Huia remembers “Nanny Rina in the house that once stood down by the river. The house was a bit like the old woman herself: every spring you expected it to be carried away in the raging torrent, but for years it managed to remain” (36). The house’s dwindling resistance

to the encroaching river is an apt metaphor for the novel's depiction of the gradual assimilation of Māori into settler society.

In contrast to the cultural assimilation concealed within the seemingly organic Europeanness of the urban setting in *The Love Apple*, in *The Cost of Courage* Māori are simply marginalised within a European cultural framework. The community in Reefton is overwhelmingly European and while Māori are described as having a settlement near Black's Point there is no suggestion that they probably owned or used the land on which Reefton was built prior to the establishment of the European community (268). In this way, the impact of settlement on Māori land use and ownership is evaded so that the legitimacy of the dominant European community's presence seems indisputable. Furthermore, Māori characters are portrayed as cultural outsiders in much the same way as the Chinese characters. For example, a Chinese miner, Feng, is renamed Chinese Bill by locals who feel that his name is too close to the English 'fang' and Sam Kenyon becomes exasperated, giving "a small sigh", when trying to explain to Chinese Bill that his throwaway remark that "the devil finds work for idle hands" does not mean he (Sam) is possessed by demons (326-7). In much the same way, Alice's interaction with a Māori couple who wish to buy some greenstone they have spotted in the stream in her and Sam's backyard suggests that Alice is the 'local' and the Māori couple are the foreigners with an alien language and customs. Reference is made to their unintelligibility, with Alice rolling her eyes when they do not understand, and Sam warning Alice's son Michael to "keep an eye on them" until he arrives (139-40). The British community appears culturally dominant, long-established, and native to New Zealand while Māori

are portrayed not as an indigenous culture but as disparate, culturally ‘other’ individuals who seem unfamiliar with the local culture.

While settlers have frequently written about the significance of the pastoral or the wilderness in nationalist mythology, the city’s significance as an unreservedly European cultural space has been neglected to the extent that it is seen as a culture-less site, invested only with the detritus of global capitalism. However, the cultural significance of the city for settlers has been hinted at when Māori protest has focused on urban sites. Such protests have often provoked greater settler outrage than claims on rural or wild land. The reasons are complex, including the obvious fact that more settlers are directly affected by claims on urban spaces. However, the taming of nature to create towns and cities forged a space that is considered the cultural antithesis of Māori spaces. It can be argued that Māori protests re-introduce pre-settlement history into urban spaces, destabilising the cultural hegemony of the city. The 11-week long occupation of Moutoa Gardens in the North Island city of Wanganui in 1995 by local Māori, and its cultural aftermath, is evocative of the cultural meaning of the urban space for settlers. The gardens were established in the nineteenth century and later named after the 1864 battle of Moutoa between settlers (and some local Māori) and Pai Marire Māori (whose religion was considered at the time fundamentally anti-European) who had challenged the legitimacy of the Wanganui settler settlement (Moon 7). When Māori staged an occupation in 1995 claiming the Gardens were on Māori land, local settlers were outraged at both the sit-in and the local council’s refusal to step in and forcibly end the protest (Moon 37), culminating in 700 mostly white marchers walking past the Gardens after two months of occupation singing God Defend New Zealand (Barber). Singing the

national anthem appealed to nationalist sentiment, tacitly casting the attempt to reintroduce pre-settlement history into the urban consciousness as an ‘attack’ on New Zealand. This suggests that settler hostility to the protest was not just a re-assertion of national ownership of the Gardens but a defence of the urban space as a space defined by European culture and knowledge.

The cultural hegemony of urban spaces is further exemplified by post-occupation conflict over the various memorials in Moutoa Gardens. The Māori protesters had pointed out that a number of statues and monuments in the Gardens caused “a great deal of cultural offence and discomfort” as objects that vilified Pai Marire Māori, including a monument to “friendly Māori who died defending law and order over fanaticism and barbarism” (Moon 10). Four years later a stone memorial for a toddler who drowned in the Moutoa Gardens fountain during the occupation was an illegally placed in the Gardens. It was repeatedly attacked, presumably as “retribution for attacks on a European statue”, and was eventually removed, with Mayor Chas Poynter suggesting that 99% of the city supported removing the monument (“Council Right To Remove Statue”). The original statues in Moutoa Gardens have been retained. The ongoing cultural tension about Moutoa Gardens suggests that the introduction of critical views of British settlement into urban spaces is seen as culturally threatening. Furthermore, even when such views have been resolved to settler satisfaction (it was found that the Moutoa Gardens site was not Māori land), any record of Māori resistance to the settler cultural presence in the urban space, however subtle, is untenable. It is notable that the European statues do not acknowledge Māori resistance to settlement, casting the actions of Pai Marire Māori as primitive ‘barbarism’ rather than considered opposition. The Moutoa

Gardens conflict, like the conflict over One Tree Hill, is evocative of how the urban space is vigorously defended as an unproblematically European space.

The way in which Māori are marginalised in urban spaces in *The Cost of Courage* and *The Love Apple* reflects the insistent cultural hegemony of the urban space. While *The Love Apple* depicts Māori as assimilated into settler culture in a way that maintains the dominance of settler culture (as discussed in Chapter Two), *The Cost of Courage* defuses the cultural influence of Māori by portraying the few Māori characters in a largely negative light. Sam Kenyon's selling of greenstone on his land to Hone is presented as a standard commercial transaction between equal parties. However, for a reader familiar with New Zealand history, Hone's purchase of greenstone that would likely have previously belonged to his iwi (as would have the land on which it was situated) brings to mind the indigenous status of Māori and the ways in which Māori were often displaced and disenfranchised by the arrival of settlers. However, any doubts regarding the validity of the settler presence and the justice of colonisation are suppressed by the suggestion that this purchase is indicative of slyness on the part of Hone since his purchase of freely accessible greenstone "will give it more value [since] [p]eople will think it must be especially fine stone if Hone was prepared to pay for it" (142-3).

In fact, Hone and his wife are uniformly portrayed as sly and devious, both through their actions and racial stereotypes. Hone is described as capitalising on communication difficulties to his own gain; firstly, taking the tin of biscuits when offered a biscuit (141) and, secondly, accusing Alice of killing his sick child with her medicine and seeking recompense from Sam (149-154). It is suggested that while Hone's wife actually believes Alice is responsible for their child's death, Hone is merely capitalising

on the opportunity for financial gain. Nevertheless, he physically threatens Alice and is stereotypically described as “flaring his nostrils and protruding his eyeballs so that the whites showed” (149). Finally, it is suggested that his wife is responsible for setting Sam and Alice’s house on fire as revenge, leading to Sam being forced to work in a coal mine and the family living in a tent for a year as they save for a new house (181-3). For most of the narrative of *The Cost of Courage*, the relationship between Maori and settlers is depicted as that between outsiders and locals but the ‘resolution’ of the clash between Alice and Hone’s wife alludes to colonial cultural conflict. When Alice is offered some unfamiliar berries by a passing Maori woman, she realises that Hone’s wife was forced to give her child foreign medicine and that she would have been just as resistant to giving her child unfamiliar food or medicine (269-70). Alice decides that she understands (but does not forgive) Hone’s wife’s (probable) revenge. Reframing the incident as cultural misunderstanding suggests that colonial injustices were a product of ignorance rather than intent. Alice’s sympathy for Hone wife leads her to be thankful for her own situation and the rest of the narrative focuses on Alice establishing a genuine relationship with her husband. This fleeting resolution of the cross-cultural conflict ultimately consigns it to the past, mirroring the way colonial conflict is often acknowledged but dismissed as irrelevant to the present in contemporary culture.

Notions of progress are always implicit in urban settings and, as already suggested by the analysis of the pastoral and wilderness tropes, are central to settler identity. The city is an ineffaceably European space that is constructed and understood in terms of the goals of modernity. As suggested by reactions to the 2006 power cuts in Auckland, cities are seen as central to New Zealand’s participation in a global economy.

Consequently, urban spaces are also considered integral to New Zealand maintaining its status as a modern and progressive country within the international community. James Belich's wry comment that "[d]ecolonisation appears to be increasing the dominance of Auckland, almost as though it is struggling to grow into a substitute for recolonisation's London" is suggestive of how the cultural meaning of the urban setting has not been substantially changed by decolonisation (*Paradise Reforged* 526). While London was the re-colonial 'gold standard' of cultural progress, in allegedly decolonised contemporary New Zealand such cultural meaning is increasingly invested in local urban spaces that are configured as symbols of cultural and economic progress. The invisibility of the urban space in understandings of national culture is indicative of how the urban setting has been somewhat more impervious to the pressures of decolonisation. The inalienable presence of Māori in wilderness and pastoral spaces problematizes settler articulations of belonging in those settings because, despite the configuration of those landscapes according to settler culture, those spaces are implicitly recognised as having been occupied by Māori before the arrival of settlers. In contrast, the presence of Māori in urban spaces does not unsettle settler sensibilities because the city is perceived to be an original space. Accordingly, analysing the continuity in the cultural significance of urban spaces between the nineteenth century and twenty-first centuries reveals how the spatial settings of *The Love Apple* and *The Cost of Courage* enable the novels to tap into and reinforce hegemonic ideas about New Zealand history and identity, despite not overtly depicting narratives of nationhood or self-consciously valorising settler history.

A cultural discourse sympathetic to revisionist histories perceives the contemporary relationship between settlers and the land as the basis of settler indigeneity, distinguishing settlers from their British ancestry and heritage.⁴ Such perspectives implicitly suggest that the land has an active and indigenising impact on settlers – that the relationship between the land and settlers is one of equality rather than dominance. This analysis of the wilderness, pastoral, and urban settings seeks to point out that seemingly postcolonial understandings of settler identity are actually still dependent on colonial inheritances. Distinctions between colonial and contemporary settler understandings of landscape are largely superficial because the ideological basis of such perspectives remains intact; the relationship between settlers and the land is still underpinned by a dominant/subordinate dynamic. The fact that the philosophical basis to liberalist cultural discourses is not recognised as related to this dynamic reveals the pervasiveness of colonial inheritances in contemporary New Zealand culture.

Identifying New Zealand as a colonial culture is not simply to suggest that the contemporary relationship between settlers and Māori is constrained by the dominant/subordinate dynamic. As suggested by the analysis of discourse regarding biculturalism in Chapter One, identifying New Zealand as a colonial culture reveals how the colonial dualism underpins not just relationships but settler cultural knowledge such as understandings of landscapes. Liberalist interpretations of national culture have often responded to postcolonial critiques by inverting rather than subverting the binary dynamic, thereby sustaining a sense of settler belonging. This is evident in Michael King's suggestion that settlers "have moved from the belief that the land belongs to us to the feeling that we belong to the land" ("Being Pakeha" 21). Jonathan Lamb has

suggested that the binary dynamic that underpins settler discourses encodes purity/impurity so that even liberalist discourses that stem from a sense of settler guilt, or impure origins, are “destined” to eventually acquire the pure origins associated with Māori (357). The way in which valorising the pure origins of Māori has essentially provided a model for articulations of settler indigeneity is evidence of how the inversion of colonial dualisms serves settler more than Māori cultural interests. The idealisation of indigenous peoples as closer to nature in the narrative of *Tamar* projects this inverted culture/nature binary into the past to provide a seamless mode of belonging for settlers (as well as diminish the extent to which colonisation impacts on Māori). This inversion of the culture/nature dualism points to how the legacy of colonial culture is not a monolithic ideology but a conceptual framework adapted to the demands of the contemporary context. Therefore, understanding New Zealand culture as a colonial culture is not to simply reassert that Māori are still marginalised within hegemonic culture but to articulate how colonial inheritances continues to inform New Zealand culture.

Notes

¹ To be clear, this discussion of understandings of the pastoral space is focusing on mainstream cultural understandings of environmentalism, not the approaches of actual environmentalists. While many environmentalists work to restructure human-nature relations, mainstream understandings of environmentalism – as suggested by those quoted – are influenced by the ‘clean, green’ image of a tourist brochure more than a knowledge of the work of environmentalists and therefore perceive being environmentally friendly as establishing better and more responsible human control over the environment rather than reconfiguring the human-nature relationship.

² Ironically, in the last novel of the trilogy, *Blue Smoke* the wealth generated through farming the most likely originally Ngāti Kahungunu-owned land enables the Murdoch family to help out the local iwi during the 1930s Depression. The Murdochs’ generosity appears emblematic of the harmonious relationship between Māori and Pākehā, overlooking how the coerced and inequitable sale of Ngāti Kahungunu land for the benefit of settlers such as the Murdochs would have contributed to the iwi’s financial difficulties.

³ Furthermore, the New Zealand Official Yearbook 2002 described New Zealand as one of the most urbanised countries in the world (*Statistics New Zealand* website).

⁴ For example, Philip Temple and Christine Dann have delineated relationships between settlers and the land, which, to varying extents serve to distinguish settlers from their British ancestry and heritage. Temple suggests that settlers are as indigenous as Māori with his assertion that the land is to settler as the marae is to Māori (11). Christine Dann articulates a more radical perspective, suggesting that settlers now have (or should

be reinterpreting) a different ideological perspective than the Western cultural heritage of experimental science, capitalism, democracy, and Christianity (“In Love With The Land” 58), that she feels “oppressed by the feeling that [she is] supposed to validate the ‘Western’ perception of what is real,” and that the term ‘Pākehā’ appeals to her because “it is not possible to keep denying the larger part of [her] daily reality in favour of Anglo-Euro-American definitions of reality” (54).

Conclusion

The 2006 re-publication of *The Denniston Rose* with photographs, maps, and diagrams of Denniston as well as fictional illustrations relating to the novel embodies the way that hegemonic understandings of colonial history and national culture legitimate and sustain settler cultural dominance. On one level, the use of historical photographs as illustrations simply validates the authenticity of the history contained within *The Denniston Rose*, suggesting that the fictional depiction of life in Denniston closely matches the historical reality. However, more complexly, the book uses not only nineteenth-century but also twentieth- and twenty-first century photographs of Denniston as well as nineteenth-century photographs of other areas of colonial New Zealand. The choice of illustrations collapses the divide between the past and the present, revealing the teleological nature of traditional understandings of colonial history. For example, one page shows a picture of the Bins area and the Brakehouse on the Denniston plateau in the 1880s, in the 1920s, and in the present (134-5). This configuration tacitly suggests that the history of Denniston is representative of a colonial history that constitutes the foundations of contemporary New Zealand.

The illustrations in *The Illustrated Denniston Rose & Heart of Coal* are the material enactment of the function of history in the novels examined in this thesis. Colonial history is implicitly presented in *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage* and *The Love Apple* as the origin of contemporary national identity. This history is drained of the processes and consequences of colonisation. In this manner, the historical narratives of these books echo the historical and cultural assumptions of

recolonisation, framing New Zealand as European cultural space. An impetus to culturally colonise New Zealand – that is, to establish New Zealand as a culturally European nation – seems to have been a recurring feature in the cultural life of New Zealand since the material wresting of the land from Māori was achieved. Cultural and literary practices that have attempted to forge a sense of belonging for settlers, such as recolonisation, cultural colonisation, and cultural nationalism, are part of an ongoing colonial discourse that attempts to naturalise the settler presence. The periodic manifestation of colonising practices is evidence of how the evasion of colonial conquest and the Māori cultural presence creates a perpetual need to suppress the problematics of colonisation and assert settler identity. Each practice has incorporated preceding traditions in response to the contemporary cultural context. Furthermore, the cultural legacies of each practice continue to influence the present. Stafford and Williams have contextualised Maoriland writing, which I suggest is a type of cultural colonisation, in this way. They argue that it created a “reality” that “is still being used now to define the nation” since “[t]here is no unmediated way back to the past; there are only versions and stories of the past which speak to the present in different ways and at different times” (273).

Indeed, the settler perspective contained in Maoriland writing can be detected in recent popular historical fiction. Stafford and Williams note that Maoriland and cultural nationalist writing both attempt to answer the questions ‘Who am I?’ and ‘Where is here?’ but point out that due to Maoriland literature’s “much more mainstream and middlebrow” appeal, it tended to celebrate the “middle-class values of progressivism and optimism” that cultural nationalists disparaged (271-2). The legacies of both cultural

nationalism and Maoriland writing influence the historical narratives of *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Love Apple*, and *The Cost of Courage*. For example, these novels are infused with cultural nationalist inheritances that, unlike Maoriland writing, elide the cultural presence of Māori and colonial conquest. However, the spatial settings that frame New Zealand as culturally European are invested with colonial ideology that emphasises the virtues of progress and the rewards of modernity. In this way, recent popular historical fiction reproduces the focus of Maoriland writing, tacitly celebrating progressivism. Furthermore, these novels reproduce the cultural optimism of Maoriland writing, depicting the settler sense of belonging and national identity as a natural and rapid development. The comparable focus of Maoriland writing and popular historical fiction is likely a product of their status as middle-brow or popular fiction since their readerships will have similar cultural requirements. However, despite similar approaches to national identity, recent historical fiction responds to a quite different cultural context than that of Maoriland writing.

Contemporary national culture is currently vexed by issues of cultural identity. While national identity has been largely protected from the influence of revisionist histories, the intensity with which both backlash and mainstream cultural discourses defend traditional, settler-dominated formulations of national culture underscores the potential threat they pose to settler cultural dominance. The representation of history in recent popular historical fiction is invested with hegemonic understandings of colonial history and national identity that evade the difficulties raised by revisionist histories in an effort to legitimate historical and contemporary settler cultural dominance. However, the depiction of history and identity in these novels does not constitute a novel resistance to

the pressures of decolonisation so much as reflect the way in which hegemonic culture defuses the impact of revisionist histories. Hegemonic formulations of national identity have selectively incorporated recolonial antecedents but refined these in a way that appears to substantively respond to postcolonial concerns while sustaining Eurocentric formulations of national identity. The practices of containment that enable national identity to be depicted as unproblematically culturally European in recent popular historical fiction mirror the cultural practices of containment employed in mainstream cultural discourses.

The cultural ramifications of revisionist histories have produced a spectrum of cultural discourses — from those that resist revisionist histories to those that accept them — which tacitly attempt to bridge the gulf between a hegemonic national identity based on traditional understandings of colonial history and official revisionist histories. It is frequently alleged that laypeople are not politically permitted to contribute to the cultural debate regarding the significance of revisionist histories, particularly if they resist the growing cultural influence of Māori.¹ This sense of public alienation has informed the positive reception of recent popular historical fiction to some extent, as suggested by the analysis of the media reception of these books in the Introduction. However, the appeal of such fiction is not limited to those readers who resist revisionist histories since the way in which these historical narratives defuse the cultural influences of revisionist histories meets the cultural requirements of backlash, mainstream, and, in the case of *Tamar*, even liberal cultural perspectives.

This analysis of recent historical popular fiction has focused on the common cultural subtext underpinning *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *The*

Love Apple. But, as acknowledged in the Introduction, the novels offer a range of historical perspectives. The diverse interpretations of colonial history contained in these books that depict a hegemonic formulation of national identity reflects the various ways in which settler culture defuses the cultural influence of revisionist histories.

Furthermore, even as each narrative offers a particular rationalisation of colonial conquest that sustains settler cultural dominance, the legacy of colonialism manifests in each narrative in ways that reveal the limitations of such practices of containment.

The Denniston Rose presents the most hegemonic perspective of colonial history, with the Māori cultural presence barely registering in its depiction of colonial history and no indication of the colonial conquest that preceded settlement. The suggestion by Janet McAllister that the lack of Māori characters in books such as Pattrick's "reflects the relative geographical and social separation of the communities at the time" is to some extent valid (61). Yet the elision of the Māori cultural presence in this narrative of pioneering settlement reproduces hegemonic understandings of settlement as a battle between settlers and the landscape, avoiding the fact that the land had to be acquired from Māori before such a clash could take place. It is not the lack of Māori characters, but the dehistoricised and monocultural portrayal of the colony that renders the historical perspective in *The Denniston Rose* recolonial since the casual dismissal of the cultural presence of Māori prior to and at the beginning of settlement sustains the legitimacy of settlement and settler cultural dominance.

The Love Apple portrays a similarly monocultural and dehistoricised colonial history, although the influence of revisionist histories permeates its narrative. The novel depicts fleeting and fragmented Māori resistance to the cultural presence of settlers but

Māori are presented as being effortlessly assimilated into settler society, thereby dissolving such tensions as well as colonial injustices such as racial prejudice. Geoffrey's hypothesizing that his part-Māori son, Oliver, is "one of a new people," is reminiscent of contemporary notions of a Kiwi identity that is not governed by any particular culture and untroubled by colonial origins (138). The depiction of racial prejudice in *The Love Apple* registers the influence of revisionist histories, although the significance of racism is contained in much the same way as an investment in 'Kiwi' identity defuses the contemporary significance of colonial injustices. When Oliver's friends are unable to answer his question about the origins of school 'crazes', such as marbles and kites, they muse "[s]ome things just were: whites were better than blacks, men better than women, the British best of all, school crazes came and went. There were some certainties you didn't question" (242). This passage implicitly relegates such prejudices to a less enlightened colonial past – similar to the way that current cultural discourses acknowledge colonial injustices towards Māori but, in order to dissolve their contemporary relevance, argue that a cohesive national identity that merges Māori and settler culture has since emerged.

The narrative of *The Cost of Courage* is empty of settlement and colonial conquest yet contemporary cultural concerns can be detected in the narrative. The misunderstanding between Alice and Hone's wife regarding Alice giving Hone's wife's baby some medicine raises the issue of cultural conflict in colonial New Zealand. Alice's eventual recognition of the misunderstanding from Hone's wife's perspective enables her to recognise the dispute as stemming from cultural misunderstanding rather than malice. The 'resolution' of cross-cultural conflict within *The Cost of Courage* is evocative of

contemporary explanations of injustices related to colonisation as unfortunate but isolated incidents that stemmed as much from cultural misunderstanding as from prejudice.

Furthermore, just as such explanations work to dismiss colonial injustices as therefore unrelated to contemporary New Zealand, the narrative implicitly consigns such conflict to the past as the rest of the narrative focuses on the main plot which is Alice gaining the courage to tell her husband the truth about her past.

Tamar depicts the most revisionist understanding of colonial history, acknowledging the colonial displacement and dispossession of Māori as well as the ongoing cultural presence of Māori. Yet the meaning of the historical setting in *Tamar* is inconsistent. The frequent acknowledgement that Māori were oppressed both economically and culturally in colonial New Zealand is offset by the apparent financial and cultural security of the specific Māori characters. While the experiences of Tamar and her family are portrayed as representative of settler experiences of colonial history, those of Te Kepa and his family are seemingly not representative. The paradoxical historical perspective of *Tamar* reflects how the significance of revisionist histories is confined to certain aspects of colonial history – even from an ostensibly liberal perspective. That is, while revisionist histories have precipitated a new understanding of Māori experiences of colonisation, there has not been a reciprocal updated perspective of settler experiences of colonisation since to do so would destabilise hegemonic understandings of national identity. Consequently, because *Tamar* is primarily an account of a settler family, the ramifications of the revisionist historical perspective for the depiction of national identity are contained in this novel by distancing colonial injustice from the central characters, both settlers and Māori.

The novel's projection of an idealised biculturalism onto early twentieth-century New Zealand society is representative of how the cultural perspective of liberal discourses that accept revisionist histories is still influenced by colonial inheritances. The novel finishes with the funeral of Tamar's friend Dr. John Adams, who married Tamar's servant-cum-friend Riria. The unexpected arrival at the service of a crowd of local Māori whom John had treated free of charge, "adorned with fresh greenery from native trees" with "[t]heir mostly bare feet whisper[ing] on the wooden boards" and "the smell of the forest accompanying them", suggests the cultural accord between Māori and settlers as well as a primitivist view of Māori common to liberal cultural perspectives that invert the civilised/primitive hierarchy to reify Māori culture (535). Furthermore, the final statement, following Tamar's exit from the church, that "[i]n a tree nearby, a fantail laughed joyously" suggests that settlers are now indigenous (537). Given the earlier explanation of the spiritual significance of the fantail, the appearance of the fantail at the end of the novel implies that the fantail is escorting John to the underworld. Despite not being born in New Zealand, John is accepted into the natural world as native, and the ability of Tamar to recognise this sign in the natural landscape indicates her own indigeneity. However, the biculturalism depicted in *Tamar* is largely decorative since the depiction of New Zealand society as based on European social, economic, and political networks articulates an understanding of New Zealand that is, at its core, culturally European.

The presence of a range of historical perspectives in *The Denniston Rose*, *The Love Apple*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *Tamar* underlines how recent historical fiction, like settler culture, is haunted by the legacy of colonialism. Despite their generally

occluding colonial conquest, the cultural presence of Māori intrudes in each of these narratives in ways that, upon analysis, introduces the spectre of colonialism. Settler culture, as revealed in Maoriland writing and cultural nationalist poetry, has long been predicated on diminishing the importance of colonialism in various ways. Stephen Turner has argued that settlers' awareness that the land has a history that preceded settlement creates a constant anxiety regarding origins (40). The disjuncture between pre-settlement history and settlement history renders settlement an intrusion, destabilising its legitimacy. As suggested by the way contemporary historical novels continue to evade troubling aspects of colonial history while simultaneously resolving contemporary cultural concerns that stem from that history, hegemonic settler culture requires the continual repression of colonialism.

The depiction of colonial history in these novels suggests not only a need to constantly suppress the origins of settlement but a need to deny that the settler cultural presence is indelibly connected to the Māori cultural presence. While *Tamar* and *The Love Apple* acknowledge cultural contact between Māori and settlers, with the former suggesting an unproblematic but somewhat disingenuous biculturalism and the latter depicting a process of assimilation that sees Māori society simply giving way to settler culture, even the more conservative depictions of colonial history in *The Cost of Courage* and *The Denniston Rose* tacitly register the influence of Māori. While the narrative of *The Denniston Rose* tacitly relates the settler sense of identity to the pioneering transformation of the land, the admission that the land for the Denniston mine was also cleared by local Māori points to how the settler cultural presence is connected to Māori. The clearest example of how Māori are integral to settler self-definition is in *The Cost of*

Courage. Despite being resolved mid-way through the novel, the incident with Hone's wife is a subplot that dictates the direction of the main plot. Alice and Sam are forced to move out of town and live in a tent through winter after their house is burnt down, allegedly by Hone's wife, so that Sam can save money from working in the coalmine to build a new home and set up his business again. The story then proceeds with the main narrative regarding the arranged marriage of Sam and Alice. It is arguable that had they not been forced to depend on each other as they sought to re-establish their lives together, they could have continued to stay in a loveless marriage. In this way, their interaction with Māori is directly related to how they establish a life together, changing the direction of their lives and, in turn, those of their children.

The belief that national identity itself has not been influenced by colonialism, despite being based on settler culture, assumes that colonialism pertains only to the relationship between Māori and settlers and frequently assumes that this dynamic existed only in a discrete historical period. However, the establishment of settler culture as culturally dominant in colonial New Zealand created settlers' contemporary cultural dominance. As postcolonial theorists Shohat and Stam have articulated, Eurocentrism can be perceived as "the discursive residue or precipitate of *colonialism*" (15; authors' emphasis). Therefore, colonialism not only influences the relationship between settlers and Māori, but also informs the kind of settler cultural knowledge that gets passed off as "commonsense". For example, the argument that national identity is a natural result of the cultural makeup of the nation rather than the legacy of colonialism assumes that such an identity is inherently democratic, since it is the public rather than leaders or experts who 'produce' national identity. Yet, the rhetoric regarding democracy effectively works

to sustain the cultural dominance of settlers. A primary criticism of colonialism is the way in which it awards power to the cultural centre of the colony, to European settlers. Even though appeals to democracy seem to replace the didacticism of imperialism with the will of the people, appeals to populism in a country where Europeans are the main ethnic group are resolutely colonial in that they assume that the interests of the cultural majority (or centre) must dominate those of minority cultures.²

This often invisible influence of colonialism on hegemonic culture has thwarted the ability of revisionist histories to fully destabilise the legacy of colonialism. Raymond Williams has argued that unless a clear connection is established between the past and present cultural conditions, counter-cultural discourse will fail to effectively destabilize the power of the hegemonic culture. Such a consequence can be seen in the relatively minor influence of revisionist histories on contemporary understandings of national identity. While settler identity has been destabilized, national identity has not. This is because, while the colonial settler presence has to some extent been linked to colonial Māori dispossession, a clear connection between colonial and contemporary settler cultural dominance has not been articulated. The significance of revisionist histories has been restricted to re-evaluating only the Māori experience of colonisation, not the settler experience. The deflection of the influence of postcolonialism on national identity sustains settler cultural dominance. However, as suggested by the way the Māori cultural presence intrudes on the presentation of colonial history in recent historical fiction, the evasion of colonial origins necessary to do so produces a ongoing vulnerability to, and need to re-suppress, alternative historical and cultural memories.

Mainstream perspectives that see the political attack on the tree on One Tree Hill as inexplicable are suggestive of how, as Donna Awatere words it, “New Zealand sits on top of [Māori] land” (66). ‘New Zealand’ as an identity marker papers over, not only the land’s Māori history, but also its own origins, in order to legitimate settler belonging. The cultural significance of One Tree Hill – as suggested by protestations about the introduction of an unnecessary political taint after Mike Smith’s attack – is not its role in New Zealand history but its familiar presence in the landscape over multiple generations. The tree symbolises tradition rather than history. Hegemonic formulations of national identity rely on a dehistoricised sense of tradition that evades the origins of settlement. This ahistorical perspective enables New Zealanders to celebrate the pioneer transformation of an empty landscape as the basis of New Zealand identity, reifying particular spaces as iconic landscapes that have shaped the national character. The cultural significance of colonial history in *The Denniston Rose*, *Tamar*, *The Cost of Courage*, and *The Love Apple* is in the way that the dehistoricised portrayal of colonial New Zealand mirrors the cultural preoccupations of settler culture – evading the moment of settlement and processes of colonisation to sustain this view of national identity. Hegemonic formulations of national identity naturalise a sense of belonging, not by honestly engaging with history but by essentially re-iterating cultural mythology sustained by colonial cultural inheritances. To achieve a secure sense of belonging, settler culture needs to acknowledge the origins of settlement and the settler role in the history of colonisation. Only then will New Zealand be able to legitimately leave its colonial origins in the past.

Notes

¹ See the quote from Chris Trotter in the Introduction in which he argues that the debate regarding race relations and the Treaty of Waitangi is dominated by elite groups. Similarly, conservative commentator David Round has argued in relation to the Treaty of Waitangi that “[w]e pay lip-service to democracy, but at the same time the areas where ordinary people are entitled to have a valid serious opinion are shrinking daily” (10).

² To be clear, this passage is criticising dualist understandings of democracy, not democracy itself. I am highlighting the possibility of more inclusive yet still democratic understandings of cultural representation. A comparative example is the difference between two democratic forms of political representation: First-Past-the Post (FPP) and Mixed-Member-Proportional (MMP).

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